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rocky hill LIFE
EDITION

ROCKY HILL/CROMWELL LIFE
October 2016 • TurleyCT.com
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Volume 4, Edition 1

Play ball

New Miracle Field opens at Elm Ridge Park

See story on page 27

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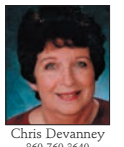

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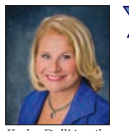

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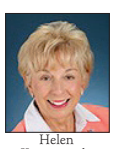

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"We're looking more at areas where we can work collaboratively with each other to streamline services and trim expenses."
– Mayor Claudia Baio

See story page 14

ON THE COVER

P.J. Reilly, 9, is thrilled to be playing baseball on the new Miracle Field at Rocky Hill, located in the center of Elm Ridge Park.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
See story page 27

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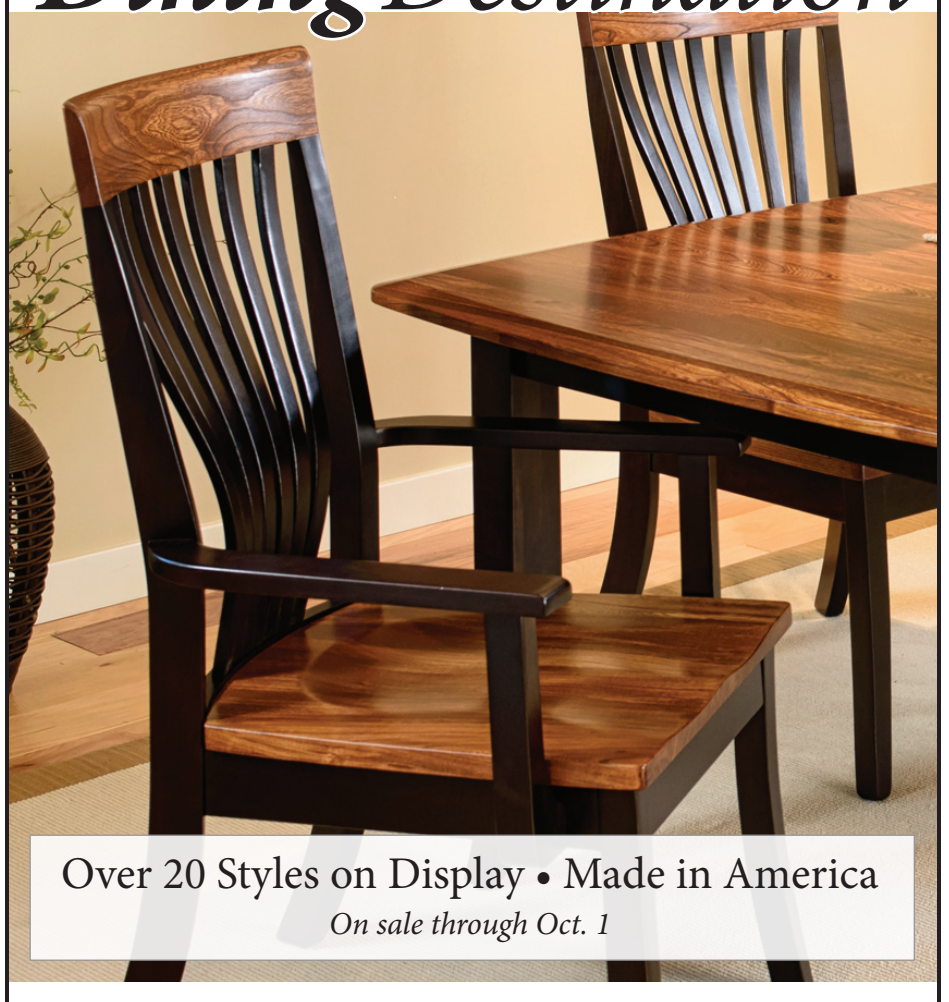

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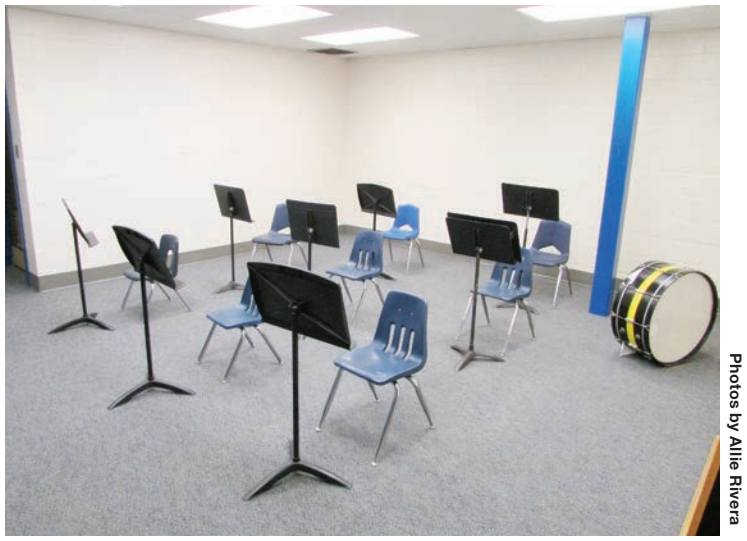
LIFE *in the classroom*

Schools see changes of all sizes as the new academic year begins

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer



Photos by Allie Rivera

Left: Director of School Facilities Ron Lamontagne showed those on the tour the replaced countertops and newly painted cabinets and tiles in a classroom at Stevens School. **Top above:** Five science classrooms were completed over the summer, including four on the upstairs level that are all connected, and one downstairs for botany class adjacent to the school's greenhouse. **Above:** The former locker room at West Hill School was converted into the new band room.

Members of the Board of Education, school administrators and others kicked off the new academic year by touring the four schools in the district to see all of the changes that occurred over the summer.

Ron Lamontagne, director of school facilities, led the tours and complimented the teams of custodians and maintenance workers who spent the summer preparing for the return of students. The tour began at West Hill School, where changes were apparent as soon as visitors walked in the door.

"We had quite a bit of change here in the lobby," Lamontagne said.

The previously open counter space to the secretaries' area is now enclosed in glass for their safety and security. Lobby carpeting was removed and replaced with walk-off flooring, a mat-like surface made of tufted vinyl that traps dirt and debris from shoes.

The floor of the gymnasium was completely refinished and for the first time that work was done by in-house custodial staff.

"They really did an excellent job with it," Lamontagne said.

Through the gymnasium, space that had previously been a locker room is now the school's band room. Lockers were removed and chairs and music stands added. The adjacent shower space was converted into the music office.

On the other side of the school were some larger changes. In addition to the installation of walk-off flooring where there had previously been tile, West Hill expanded with the addition of four new portable classrooms.

Changes in the lobby at Stevens School reflected the changes at West Hill. Walk-off flooring was installed in the entryway and the carpeting in the already enclosed main office was replaced.

In the 12 classrooms of the original building, maintenance staff replaced countertops and painted cabinets and tiles. Window air conditioning units were also added in those rooms and places that already had air conditioners that were underperforming received larger units, including the replacement of the undersized air conditioner in the library.

"You can feel the difference the moment you walk in here," Principal Jason Maziarz said.

Across the hall from the

Photos by Allie Rivera

Left: **Included in the tour of what has been completed were glimpses at renovations still to come. This space at the high school will become special education classrooms.**
Right: **The entrance to the high school is partially completed with new tiles and walls to the left and the old walls still in place to the right.**

library, bathrooms were renovated with updates to the tile, plumbing fixtures and ceiling grid.

"We gave the bathrooms a facelift," Lamontagne said with a smile.

The gymnasium also had work done, including new wall pads donated by the Parent Teacher Organization and a refinished floor completed by in-house staff.

"Our custodial staff is amazing," Maziarz said. "It's been an absolute pleasure to work with Ron."

The entryway to Griswold Middle School is now also fitted with walk-off flooring instead of tiles, which Lamontagne said would often be slippery for students. Other than that, and painting within the classrooms, no major changes happened at the middle school, but a great deal of work by the custodians to ensure it was prepared for the first day of school was completed throughout the summer.

"Overall, there was a lot of deep cleaning at this school," he said.

The high school was where the greatest amount of change took place over the summer. With the continuation of the school's major renovation project, new areas of the building that were previously closed are now open.

This year students will be able to utilize the five new science classrooms that were completed over the summer. Four of those rooms are located on the second floor and are connected through prep rooms. That space was previously occupied by the guidance department and some special education classrooms.

The space includes NEASC-

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Photos by Allie Rivera

Top left: The lobby at West Hill School has been updated to include new walk-off flooring and an enclosed area for the secretaries, as well as a new door cordoning off the rest of the school from the entryway. **Top right:** For the first time, in-house maintenance staff refinished the gymnasium floor at West Hill School.

required high-density storage as well as updated technology and improved air quality; NEASC is an accreditation agency. The fifth science room will be used for botany and is located on the first floor, next to the greenhouse.

Large changes were made to the gymnasium as well including a fresh coat of paint, new wall pads, bleachers, lighting and heating and cooling systems. Additionally, locker rooms were built adjacent to the gymnasium.

"It just makes sense, the lockers are next to the gym," Principal Mario Almeida said with a laugh.

The summer also brought about the expansion of the cafeteria and addition of walk-in freezers for the kitchen staff.

In addition to showcasing the work that was done during the summer, Lamontagne and Almeida showed those on the tour the work that is still to come. That includes future special education classrooms and future art room and life skills rooms, both of which are partially completed.

The life skills room, which includes a small kitchen, also has a sensory room for students with special needs.

"This is a very special room for us," Almeida said. "This is a very important classroom for some of our students."

With so many changes over the summer, some highly visibly and others less noticeable, Lamontagne and other district administrators are excited for the school year just begun.

"We're ready for everyone to have a great year," he said. **RHL**

Above: Adjacent to the newly converted band room is the new music office that was previously the shower space next to the gym at West Hill.

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Popular around town

Pokemon Go takes over the world, and my life

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

On a warm evening during a recent trip to New Jersey, I was walking down a quiet street with six of my friends, each of us with a cell phone in hand. From behind us came the whir of three or four bicycles swiftly approaching.

I turned to see a cluster of boys on bikes, no more than 13 years old, coming up quickly, the first in the pack opening his mouth to speak to us.

"There's a bulbasaur on Fourth Avenue," he said as he passed.

We all shouted back a series of thank yous and turned toward Fourth Avenue.

I had resisted the Pokemon Go trend for a while. The cell phone app, which was released in early July, is the latest in the Pokemon franchise, a series of video games, television shows and collectible cards that sprang up in the late 1990s and whose popularity continues.

The original concept as a role-playing game for the Nintendo Game Boy system tasked players with catching a series of digital monsters, spawning the game's catchphrase, "Gotta catch 'em all."

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As a child in the '90s, the Pokemon trend didn't really appeal to me. At the time, I was far more concerned with scouring Tiger Beat magazine and "catching" all the pictures I could find of Hanson and the Spice Girls.

When Pokemon Go was released this year, I assumed it would remain on the fringes of my consciousness, much like the rest of my Pokemon knowledge, but this was something different.

At its most basic level, Pokemon Go is a continuation of that first-person role-playing game from the '90s, but the playing field has been expanded to include literally the entire world. In this game, Pokemon creatures could be anywhere. All players need to do is walk around to find them.

That aspect is where the game starts to appeal to a wider range of people. Walking is the key component to success within the game.

When using the app, Pokemon Go can track how far a person walks, and the further the distance, the more becomes available. Walking allows people to level up, find more monsters and even hatch eggs to produce new creatures.

Not only does the game force users to get up and actually move around, it encourages them to learn a bit more about their surroundings. Throughout the globe are designated PokeStops, resource centers for the game where players can stock up on goods needed to catch Pokemon.

Each of those PokeStops, however, is located at a significant landmark, ranging from Union Square in New York City to the historic Congregational Church and Academy Hall Museum in Rocky Hill.

It was in Rocky Hill where my love of the game first started to take shape. I had downloaded the app but not had much chance to do anything with it until I had a bit of downtime in between a meeting scheduled at the Board of Education and a meeting scheduled at the Cora J. Belden Library.

Knowing I didn't have enough time to leave and come back, I pulled out my phone, opened up the app, quickly turned down the volume of the adventurous-sounding music, looked around in embarrassment, and carried on.

As I walked around the block, I could see other groups of people clearly also playing the game. While the idea of an app that requires users to have their phones out seems anti-social at face value, everyone I encountered playing the game, from Rocky Hill to New Jersey, was eager to share what they've encountered and help others.

I spoke with Michael Murphy, reference librarian at the Cora J. Belden Library and a fellow game player, about his experience being located right in the hub of play.

"You can tell that they're playing the game, too, and you can strike up a conversation."

– Michael Murphy

"When I've been out walking around the block, I've met so many people because you can tell that they're playing the game, too, and you can strike up a conversation," he said.

"It's something for all ages. I play the game with my kids, who are 2 and 5, and at the library I see different age groups playing together."

Murphy said the library, like many other businesses across the globe, is looking to capitalize on the popularity of the game by offering new and veteran players opportunities to play more. He and others at the library hope to use the fact that this area of town has the greatest number of PokeStops to their advantage by having a Pokemon Go Safari and walking participants around the area.

"We're hoping as we go around and stop at all of the PokeStops, we want to have some kind of brochure or poster that will talk about the history of those different stops," he said. "Our goal is to bring the community together, which is what we try to do with a lot of our programs."

Nationwide, the benefits of Pokemon Go have started to make themselves known. Websites such as Science Daily, Pharmacy Times and even Forbes magazine have touted the physical and mental health benefits of the game. Anecdotal stories circulating on social media are countless.

As a 29-year-old Level 8 player, I am not the poster child for Pokemon Go. I don't know all of the names of all of the creatures. I have never once had a Pokemon Go battle, nor do I typically even try to get into that facet of the game.

I openly judge my favorite monsters on their cuteness and not their strength points. But in the short amount of time that I've been playing the game, I have walked more than I would before, bonded with friends and strangers, and had a bit of fun while doing it. **RHL**

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Ivana Marrero stands amid the merchandise in her Lily Madison Consignment & Design shop at 53 New Britain Ave.

Photo by Mark Jahne

Following her passion

New owner expands the offerings at Lily Madison consignment shop

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Ivana Marrero was doing just fine selling real estate. But it wasn't fulfilling her need to be passionate about her work.

So she made the decision to follow her dream and purchase a consignment shop. The Wethersfield resident bought Lily Madison Consignment & Design at 53 New Britain Ave. over the summer.

"I've wanted to run a consignment store for 30 years. When my daughter was little, I didn't know what to do with her nice dresses," she said.

Marrero knows the previous owner of the store and asked to be informed if that person ever decided to sell the business. When that time came, they worked out a deal.

"I talked it over with my husband and we made the decision to buy it. When you love what you do, it's not work," she said.

This is her first foray as a business owner and she is the only staff member. The store is approximately 2,500 square feet in size.

The aisles at Lily Madison are lined with clothing, furniture, art, shoes, jewelry, lamps, designer handbags, dishes, giftware and more. Approximately one-third of her inventory is clothing. Most of the remainder is furniture or home décor.

The majority of the items are on consignment although she also buys new from select vendors. Among the stock she added after taking over the shop were evening wear and dresses for little girls.

"It doesn't seem like a consignment store. It feels like more of a boutique," Marrero said. "We've got all kinds of things."

In the few months she has operated the store, she has already hosted customers from as far away as the shoreline and Fairfield County. The shop was once a bank, so she is utilizing the secured area in the rear for formal wear and named it Juliana's Vault after her daughter.

Hellene Agnes is one of several regular customers.

"I go in there quite often. I just bought a beautiful dresser they had there. Each week I go in and there's something different," she said.

She praised Marrero for being pleasant, helpful and well organized.

"She's always asking if she can help with anything. She has some very nice name-brand pocketbooks and clothes," Agnes said. **RHL**

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Pancakes for the brave

Photos by Mark Jahne

Representing the police department are, from left, Chief Michael Custer, his wife Sara, Sgt. Steve Morgan and son Jaxon, Lt. Brian Klett, Officer Tony Miceli and his daughter Adelina.

Rocky Hill Volunteer Ambulance members, from left, Christina Eddy, Bryant Goodrich, Vivian Grayeb and Bryan Eddy enjoyed their meal.

Knights of Columbus St. James Council 10651 hosted a breakfast of pancakes and sausages Sept. 11 to honor Rocky Hill's police, firefighters and emergency medical personnel.

The kitchen crew takes a momentary break from their duties in the St. James parish hall.

Members of the town's volunteer fire department appreciated the attention, especially considering that the breakfast was held on the 15th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attack.

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From the Mayor's Desk

Remembering those who died on Sept. 11, 2001

by Mayor Claudia Baio

Welcome to September and back to school. We are already in full swing and have had a flurry of community events, starting with a solemn and important one.

This month we recognized the 15th-year remembrance of the Sept. 11, 2001 tragedy. Rocky Hill joined towns across the nation in holding a remembrance ceremony.

For those of you who were in attendance, you saw first hand what a nice job our fire department did to coordinate a very moving ceremony. We remembered all the victims, their families, and our heroic first responders who came together on that tragic day and the days that followed. Never forget.

A lovely video presentation of the photographs taken that day was created by resident Michael O'Toole. That video can be seen on the fire department and the mayor's Facebook pages and no doubt has been shared beyond that.

You may recall the announcement from a couple months back about one of the awards that the Town of Rocky Hill received from CRCOG. We received two awards, one of which was related to our participation, along with four other towns, in the five-town Crest diving team.

The Intertown Cooperative Award would not have been received were it not for the volunteer efforts of the participating officers. At our September Town Council meeting, we recognized the two Rocky Hill Police Department members of the diving team, Sgt. Steve Morgan and Officer Jon Lammers.

The time that these two gentlemen put into the diving team, including the training, is on their own time and completely voluntary.

Thank you, gentlemen, for all you do.

On Sept. 16 we celebrated the grand opening and ribbon cutting of Miracle Field. What a great event. Hats off to our Parks and Recreation Department, Miracle Field committee members and volunteers including Sebby Sorrentino, Alan Greenspan and Brian Dillon, who served as the master of ceremonies.

It was an exciting evening, in particular for the athletes who christened the field with their Wiffle ball game.

Our last week of September will be filled with more community events, starting with the Cop on Top event on Friday, Sept. 23. Come out to support our police department as they work to raise money for the Special Olympics.

Saturday, Sept. 24 is the date of the Hoof It for Haiti road race and 18th annual Rocky Hill High School Royal Blues Invitational Band Show at the high school, always a great event. The weekend will round out with a Sept. 25 car show in the parking lot of Michelangelo's to benefit the Rocky Hill food pantry.

On a more formal note, on Sept. 22 I participated as one of the panelists in the Connecticut Council of Small Towns COST/the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Business Association REEBA Municipal Energy Summit, which was focused on presentations relating to solar projects and virtual net metering in municipalities.

The event was open to municipalities across the state to address emerging energy saving opportunities and future energy initiatives impacting the renewable industries in Connecticut. Various other speakers including legislative leaders also presented the panels.

It was interesting to be able to share Rocky Hill's experience, in particular with our recent work collaboratively with the other municipalities and REEBA in seeking legislation that would assist us in moving forward with our solar project and also in hearing stories of other municipalities.

Thank you to all who came out to the most recent community meet and greet event, this time Gelato with the Mayor, and a thank you to DiFiore's pasta shop for hosting the event. We had great weather for a lovely Friday afternoon before the Labor Day holiday weekend.

The next event will be held sometime mid-fall. Stay tuned for details. I do hope to see you there.

Also following on some of the suggestions that we hear from you, the residents of Rocky Hill, if you have questions that you think might be of general concern, something that you would like to see addressed in a future edition of this column, please send those to me. As always, I invite you to please feel free to contact me at cbaio@rockyhillct.gov or 860-258-2740.

You can also find updates at my mayor's Facebook page: Claudia Baio for Rocky Hill. **RHL**

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Working together

Mayors share ideas and seek solutions at monthly meetings

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Talk of large regional initiatives sometimes leaves people feeling unsettled. This is New England, after all, where every city and town is an entity unto itself and local control is highly valued.

But that doesn't mean regional initiatives of more modest means need to be excluded, especially when they can result in more efficient government and saving taxpayers money. That's why six area mayors have been meeting once a month to share thoughts and ideas.

"Back in early spring, Paul Montinieri in Wethersfield reached out to the surrounding towns," said Cromwell Mayor Enzo Faienza.

The proposal was to meet each month to discuss matters of common interest. Faienza signed on, as did mayors Claudia Baio of Rocky Hill and Roy Zartarian of Newington. Luke Bronin of Hartford and Mark Kaczynski of Berlin also chose to participate.

Politics didn't come into the equation. Baio, Bronin and Montinieri are Democrats. Faienza, Kaczynski and Zartarian are Republicans. All share a common interest in better serving their constituents and see a benefit in getting to know one another.

"The idea is to communicate and pass information along. … How can we help each other out?" Faienza said.

"So far, it's gone very well. We're concentrating on things we know we can successfully do together. We're all trying to do what's best for our towns."

He described a previous initiative in which Cromwell and Portland shared a grant that allowed them to acquire a crack-sealing machine for road repair, a camera system to inspect sewers, and a bulldozer.

"We're calling it a regional mayors' discussion and roundtable. We've had fairly lengthy conversations … open dialogues," Montinieri said.

The group has met four times thus far. State legislators often join them and once each mayor brought along his or her town manager. U.S. Rep. John Larson has also dropped in.

Montinieri said the idea is to look for synergy and savings and ways to help one another. That's particularly true as they watch the financial challenges of Hartford and listen to what Bronin is trying to do to keep the capital city's financial ship from hitting the rocks.

"Luke is on a parallel effort with CCM [Connecticut Conference of Municipalities]," Montinieri said. "The mayors in this group feel strongly that we should have Hartford in this dialogue."

The city has long been plagued with budget woes and a ranking

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among the most impoverished urban centers in the nation. It also suffers from the fact that so much of its property is either tax exempt or only pays only a modest portion of assessed tax value under the state's PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) program.

There is the chance the city could face bankruptcy but Montinieri is confident the legislature will not allow that to happen. He firmly believes that what happens in Hartford directly affects the suburbs.

In the meantime, the suburban towns are seeking ways to cooperate with one another. He said they also know that what each town does is not occurring in a vacuum.

"We're talking about paving projects," he said.

They're also looking at ways to save money by going in together on purchasing fire apparatus and police cars.

"There's been a real, honest awareness that this hasn't happened in the past. I'm encouraged by the cooperative spirit. It's a very worthwhile initiative," Montinieri said.

"It's always good to talk with other mayors about ways we can work together to our mutual benefit," Zartarian said. "We're facing the same challenges, though not to the same extent as Hartford."

All of them struggle with the dependency upon the property tax to raise needed revenue. They also struggle to cope with declining state financial aid.

"We're looking more at areas where we can work collaboratively with each other to streamline services and trim expenses."

– Mayor Claudia Baio

He doesn't want to see a regional entity created that would cost each municipality its local autonomy, but that is neither the plan nor the focus of this group.

He added that some areas of cooperation already exist. Examples the mayor cited are police accident reconstruction and major crime squads, fire department mutual aid pacts, and the combined ownership of a cherry picker truck by Newington and Wethersfield.

Baio contends that the increased communication alone makes the monthly meetings worthwhile. All of the mayors are dealing with tight budgets and looking for "low-hanging fruit" as ways to build a habit of working together.

"We're looking more at areas where we can work collaboratively with each other to streamline services and trim expenses. It's not partisan at all. We have a great group. Party affiliation never comes up," Baio said.

She acknowledged that having Hartford at the table creates a different dynamic but feels it important to make sure Bronin is part of the discussions.

"If the capital city fails, it has a ripple effect" on the suburbs, she said. **RH&CL**

Courtesy photos

Mayor Enzo Faienza of Cromwell

Mayor Claudia Baio of Rocky Hill

Annual fair returns

Congregational Church event will showcase a few changes

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Courtesy photos

Shoppers line up for edible treats at the Country Store.

The annual Country Fair is a decades-old tradition at the Rocky Hill Congregational Church. The new chairman is making a few tweaks to its format, but those who attend this event Oct. 22 will find plenty of familiar attractions.

Singer and songwriter Liz Reed will provide live music. The snack shack is back, as well as the "Once Again" quilt raffle. Featured attractions are the white elephant shop, jewelry shop, farmers market, tea room, holiday shop, candy shop, sew country, kid's corner, bake shop, antiques and collectibles, and the silent auction.

The fair opens at 9 a.m. and closes at 3 p.m. The tea room does not open until 11 and the silent auction closes out at 2 p.m. The church is located at 805 Old Main St. Activities will be held on three floors of the church building and in adjoining Chapin Hall.

Peter Alessi is chairman of the events committee, which includes the fair. His wife Holly is serving as a committee member and de facto secretary.

"It's a fundraiser to raise money to help the town food bank. We also contribute to the fuel program," Peter said.

All money raised by the fair goes into some form of outreach, he added. They raised approximately $12,000 this past year.

This year's fair will offer plenty of variety.

"The different booths will be in different rooms. The hottest item is

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the silent auction," Peter said.

The holiday crafts are also big sellers. Family members help run the snack shop. New this year is a room that will offer activities for children, a need the Alessis said was obvious.

There used to be such a room, but it was discontinued in the 1980s. They don't know why.

"Then we have the old country store, which is jellies and cheeses and vegetables," Holly said. "We always have the raffle for the quilt."

This item is hand crafted by church members. This may be the last year for a quilt because those crafters who participate are growing older and fewer in number, but Peter insists he fill find a way to keep it going.

Baked goods will be served in the tearoom.

"This is my first year as chairman. Right now, we have many donations from museums and businesses for the silent auction," Peter said.

He expects to receive more. This year the committee started soliciting silent auction items much earlier than in the past. He plans to donate some of his award-winning photography for sale.

The committee is particularly interested in donations for the silent auction and white elephant rooms. All items must be clean and functional; no clothing, please. Any leftover white elephant items will be donated to Savers or Goodwill, Peter said.

Holly said the fair is a lot of work and they are dependent upon the commitment of volunteers to make it all happen. Anyone interested in volunteering is encouraged to contact the church.

"It's gotten bigger and better," she said of the fair.

This is not the only event held at the Rocky Hill Congregational Church. Peter said it sponsors many activities and events every year.

Leaders of the various activities include Holly Alessi, Jean Alessi, Jeanne Alessi, Bob Carberry, Bea Donahue, John Goff, Nancy Harlow, Anita Hawkins, Ruth Jensen, Lynn McKenna, Don Pagnucco, Polly Pagnucco, Nancy Rolfe, Candy Smith, Elaine Somes and Sue Starr.

RH&CL

Courtesy photos

Christmas items are always a popular attraction at the annual Rocky Hill Congregational Church Country Fair.

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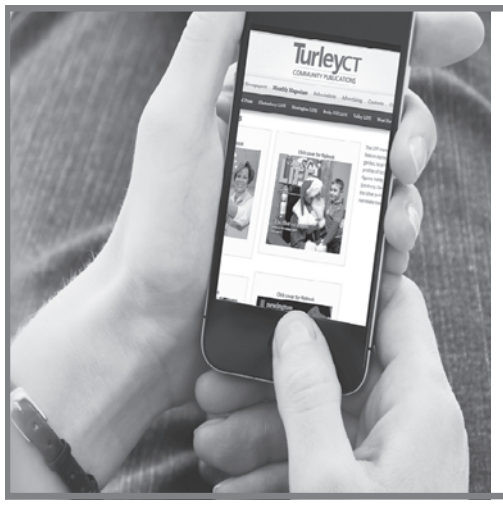

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Berlin Officer Ryan Gould, a member of the mid-state squad, sets up a portable light array at a DUI checkpoint in Rocky Hill.

Photo by Mark Jahne

Solving the case

Pooling resources helps five towns deal with serious car crashes

by Mark Jahne
Editor

It's difficult for small or mid-sized police departments to establish specialty units for various parts of their work. That requires time, money and manpower.

But combining forces enables them to greatly expand their capabilities and that's just what Berlin, Cromwell, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield have done by creating a joint highly trained unit to investigate and reconstruct the most serious motor vehicle crashes.

The Mid-State Accident Reconstruction Squad consists of 12 officers from those five towns. They are on call day or night to respond when a crash results in a serious injury or fatality. Members successfully completed at least 120 hours of intensive training on this topic.

The squad is commanded by Lt. Robert Catania of Rocky Hill and Sgt. John Zematis of Newington. Its work is overseen by Newington Police Chief Stephen Clark.

He considers the unit a benefit to all of the participating towns. Clark cited the advantage of officers working together at crash scenes, dividing up the work and sharing their collective expertise.

"You want that interoperability with adjoining departments," he said. "The more you do it, the more experience you're going to get. As a group, they work very well together."

Clark added that the thorough nature of the unit's work and the skill level of its members is also helpful when officers are summoned to testify in court cases related to those crashes.

Wethersfield Chief James Cetran is a strong supporter of the unit. Two of his officers are members of the squad.

"It's a huge value. No one department can do the training and have the equipment by itself. It's too much," he said.

"It's a win-win all around. It benefits all of us. They get very proficient at what they're doing because they get so much practice," he added.

"It's a great benefit for each of the towns. We're working as a team, coordinating, training together," Cromwell Police Chief Denise Lamontagne said.

"They all know their jobs and responsibilities. It alleviates a lot of questions," Lamontagne added. "We've had to use the mid-state reconstruction team twice in the last couple of months, as well as the major crime squad."

She said the cooperation between departments has almost become second nature. Being able to call upon the team also means that other local police assets remain free to handle other calls for service.

"In March of 2009, [retired] Chief Richard Mulhall of Newington began working on an idea in the capital region to form mid-state and metro teams" of specialized police officers, Catania said.

"This was part of a regionalization effort," Zematis added.

Not only did it provide a pool of highly trained personnel, but by going regional, the unit was able to acquire grant funding for its training. He said each town saves money and gets better service as a result.

That also drew the attention of specialized accident reconstruction schools around the country. Connecticut officers used to have to travel to

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"By May of 2009, our first reconstructionists were trained," Catania said. "Rocky Hill and Newington have a huge commitment in the unit. Cromwell, for a small town, has a very good commitment to the team."

They use a variety of equipment including surveying tools and computerized devices. Members of the team have special uniforms and protective winter gear.

They also have access to a command vehicle that carries additional equipment and can be used as on onsite testing facility for drivers who may be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.

"As technology continues to advance, it becomes essential to reconstruct these accidents. By the time we get involved, it's more of an investigative scene," Zematis said.

"Accident investigation is a completely different animal than most of the stuff we do in daily police work. Everything we do is methodical. There is a sequence to it."

Catania said some of the early cases took as long as a year to resolve. Now most investigations are completed in a couple of months.

"We roll out so often now, we have to get them done," he said. "We have advanced photography equipment. We've been using a lot more video."

He estimated that the unit is called upon at least twice a month. Sometimes its members are on regular duty and they can respond to the crash site immediately. Otherwise patrol supervisors in each town are entrusted with knowing when to call the unit and its expertise to the scene.

"Any time of the day or night, they call me and tell me what they have. I try to get there first to assess what we need and call out the guys. John and I split the supervisory responsibilities," Catania said.

"The cooperation is excellent. We have never had an issue rolling into another town," he added.

He alerts squad members by text message and they respond to the location as soon as possible. In the meantime, on-duty patrol officers are handling traffic control and dealing with any injured people.

"Seventy percent of our accidents are between Friday and Sunday and they're mostly after midnight," Zematis said.

"Everything we go to is horrendous," Catania added.

"The biggest advantage has been in the use of CDR systems," Zematis said. "It allows us to validate some of the numbers we get through the reconstruction."

CDR stands for crash data recorder. Every car built in America since 2012, and many imported from overseas, has such a device, similar to the black boxes on airplanes. CDRs record a wealth of data that can help police determine how a crash occurred and who was responsible.

"We have advanced photography equipment. We've been using a lot more video."

–Rocky Hill Lt. Robert Catania

The bottom line is that their findings cannot be wrong or incomplete. They need to hold up if challenged in court.

"This is probably the most rewarding thing you can do, to find closure for families involved in these cases," Catania said.

Some of the officers spoke about why they joined the team.

""Especially being in patrol, it lets you get involved in higher investigations," Newington Officer Matthew D'Esposito said. "It's kind of interesting how we can rebuild something. We might not get to the scene until an hour after the accident occurred."

Motor vehicle crashes are also a rare area in which police testimony and expertise can become an important ingredient of a civil trial in which one party is seeking financial compensation from the other. In their normal capacaity, officers

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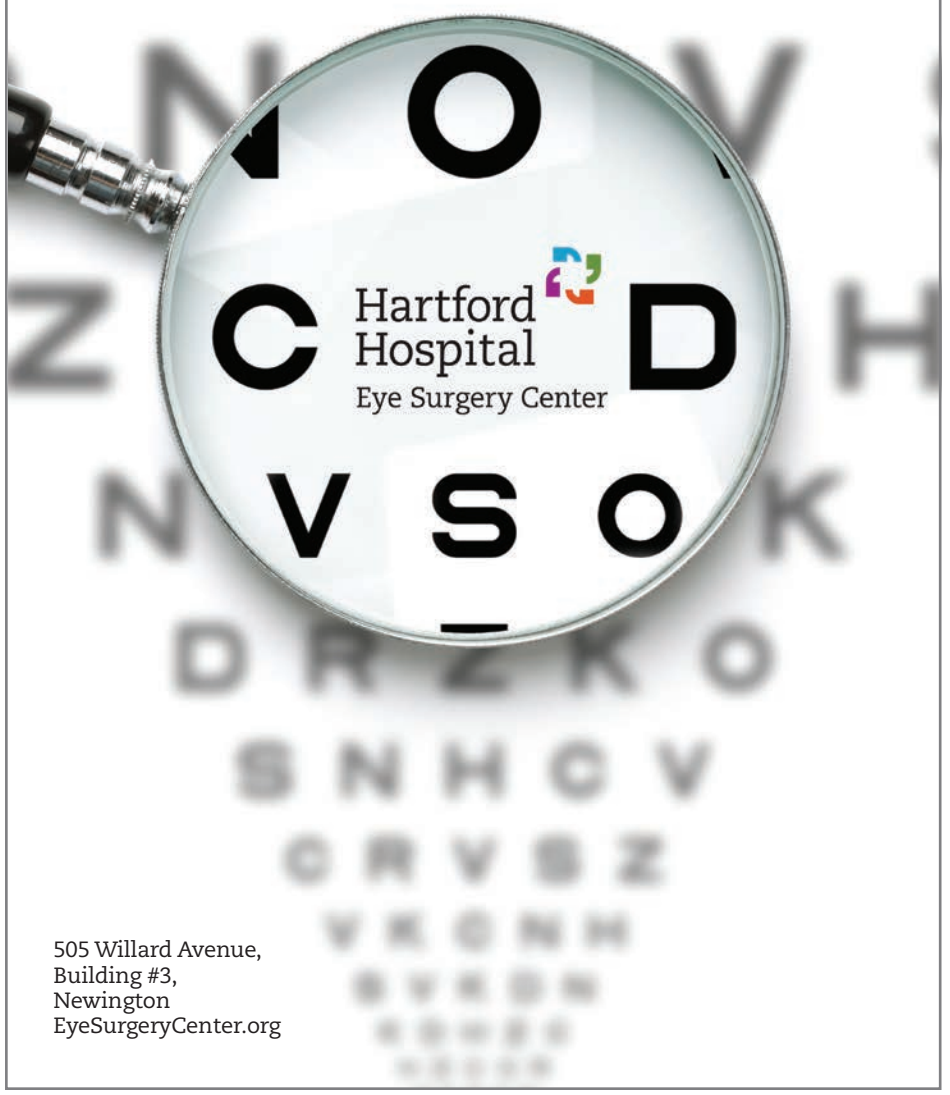

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usually become involved in criminal cases, not civil matters.

D'Esposito enjoys doing this kind of deeper case work. He added that the unit trains with similar teams in Bristol and East Hartford.

Rocky Hill Officer Jeffrey Foss-Rugan's father was killed by a drunken driver, so he brings that perspective to his work. Whether the cause of a crash was drinking or something else, he understands the importance to families of knowing what happened and why.

"I've been on the other side as a family member. It's nice to give closure to the families," he said. "You forge a relationship with some of the victim's families."

They also have developed solid teamwork with the fire departments in each town. That's important because firefighters are also called to crash scenes and sometimes need to cut victims out of crushed vehicles.

"We've forged a good relationship with our fire departments," Foss-Rugan said.

"I was in patrol when the unit was first formed," Rocky Hill Det. Peter Vantaras said. "It lets you do a full investigation, from beginning to end."

He enjoys the team aspect and how working with officers from other towns builds relationships.

"It fascinated me how much you can put the vehicle back together," Officer Ryan Gould of Berlin said.

He also likes the evidence aspect of the work. Gould has been a police officer for 15 years, but only recently joined the team. He has enjoyed attending the training programs and learning the technical skills needed for this squad.

The most important thing for this investigative team, as he sees it, is to determine the cause of the

Photo by Mark Jahnle

Rocky Hill Lt. Robert Catania and Newington Sgt. John Zematis are the commanders of the five-town Mid-State Accident Reconstruction Squad.

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crash. The answer may not always be obvious.

"We've worked a lot of pedestrian crashes and sometimes the driver did nothing wrong," Gould said. "There's far more scrutiny than anything else we do in law enforcement."

Foss-Rugan said it is easy to charge a driver who clearly made a poor or reckless decision. But charging someone who may have only displayed a slight lack of judgment is more difficult.

The Mid-State Accident Reconstruction Squad has proved so successful that the same five towns formed a major crime unit to investigate serious crimes other than homicides; the State Police has a specially trained unit to handle those crimes. Once again, pooling specially trained resources improves productivity and saves money.

"I can't speak more highly of the regional teams," Cetran, the Wethersfield chief, said. "We can now apply what we learned from the mid-state traffic squad to other areas."

He would like to see a third such team formed, this one trained to cope with incidents of mass civil disobedience.

Catania is particularly proud of the fact that no one has ever asked to leave the accident reconstruction unit. Those who moved on only did so because they were promoted to higher ranks in their departments.

"This is a huge commitment. They have to want to be here," he said. **RH&CL**

People notes

Matthew Miano received the Gretchen Bauver Award for math at Kingswood Oxford School.

Olivia Osgood was named to the dean's list at Florida Atlantic University.

Lindsey Blustein was named to the president's list at Clemson University.

Erika Vuernick was named to the president's list at Western New England University

Ellen Quintana and **Jessica Grodovich** earned high honors at Mercy High School. **Juliana Claudio, Lauren Veronneau** and **Haley Lombardo** earned first honors.

Jacquelin Saucier was named to the dean's list at the College of Saint Rose.

Cara Watts was named to the dean's list at Champlain College.

Brianna Calderon was named to the dean's list at the University of New Hampshire.

Samantha Berg and **Stephanie LoGiudice** were named to the dean's list at Tufts University.

Shane Dawson received the Middle School Achievement Award at Kingswood Oxford School. **RH&CL**

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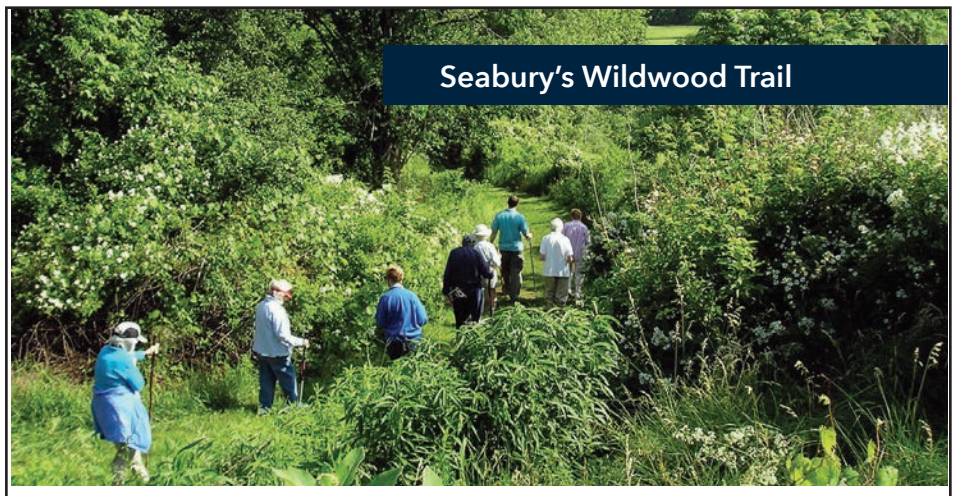

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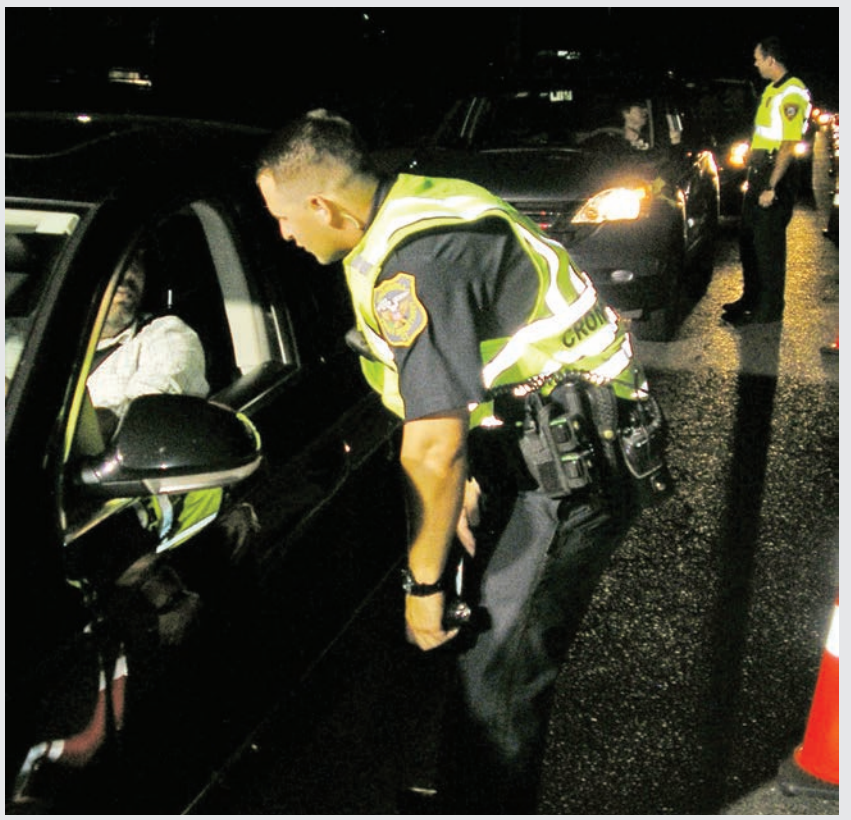
Keeping the roads safe

Photos by Mark Jahne



Cromwell Officer Kyle Perricone explains what is going on to a motorist passing through the checkpoint. In the distance is Wethersfield Officer Kevin Foster. Four police departments worked together to conduct a DUI checkpoint Sept. 8 in Rocky Hill.

Rocky Hill Officer Jeffrey Foss-Rugan gives a field sobriety test to a woman who was driving erratically. Her problem was determined to be medical in nature and not related to alcohol, but she was still required to call for a ride home.

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Courtesy photo

Grace Hoffman attended the Kids Korner Preschool for two years. She's now a first-grader at Stevens School.

EDUCATION

Kids love their Korner

Popular town preschool program has a waiting list

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

When it was time for John and Karen Hoffman to look for a preschool for their daughter Grace, they did their homework.

"We live in Rocky Hill, and both of us grew up here, so naturally we wanted to try and keep Grace in town if we could. We looked at the neighboring towns as well, but our main focus was at Kids Korner," John Hoffman said.

"When it came down to it, aside from cost, Kids Korner was state accredited and also was in line with the Rocky Hill Board of Ed curriculum, which was where we were ultimately going to be sending Grace, so we knew she would be getting a great start."

She attended the programs for ages 3 and 4 at Kids Korner and is now enrolled at Stevens School.

While at Kids Korner, Grace especially enjoyed making arts and crafts projects, bringing home many pieces of artwork. She also enjoyed music classes, often singing the songs she learned in class.

"From my perspective, the teachers became very close to Grace. She is a very loving person and the teachers there embraced that. They understand that each child is very different and they nurture their diverse personalities," Hoffman said.

"They told us from day one that their program is more about encouraging interaction between students. Not to say that learning isn't important, but they will get plenty of that in elementary schools. They want the kids to be able to get along, and think critically, and be able to communicate," he added.

"Over the two years that she attended, we have definitely seen that develop. I would definitely recommend the school, based on the staff that is there and the type of program that is run."

Kids Korner Preschool is a program for children three to five years of age designed to help get them ready for school and is operated under the auspices of the town Parks and Recreation Department. Children learn academic, social and critical thinking skills, and are exposed to a variety of art and science activities.

The state-licensed program, which meets at the community center, is licensed to take up to 14 children in each session. The morning session is for three-year-olds and the older children attend the afternoon session.

"If a program is licensed, it means

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Photos by Lisa Brisson

Left: Lisa Roncaioli, director of the Kids Korner Preschool program, leads her afternoon class in an exercise after reading them a story. **Middle:** Alisia Koruni, 4, was picked to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. **Right:** Alexandra Flores, 4, has a big laugh during lunch.

we have to meet certain standards set by the state. The standards they take into consideration are safety, teacher/child ratio, discipline, snacks, the physical environment. We have to have water tested, the staff has to be CPR and first aid certified," Lisa Roncaioli, preschool director/head teacher, said.

"We have to make sure we have an emergency evacuation plan, that our first aid kit is up to date, just little things. The state actually comes in once a year and will inspect the room. It doesn't have a whole lot to do with the curriculum. It's more for the safety of the kids and the physical area."

Roncaioli, who has been with the program for 12 years, said that while the school teaches certain skills, the individual needs of her students are also important.

"I do have some flexibility as far as following Common Core, the state curriculum. While I try to do that to some extent – it's important and there are certain academic benchmarks you want the kids to reach – I have the luxury to tailor the program a little more to the kids," she said.

"If I have kids come in and I see these kids are academically right on target, but don't know how to sit still while I'm reading a story, I can focus my curriculum to that more than the ABCs or 123s. It can be the opposite. I might have a group that's really great socially but academically, not as much, so I can flip flop it. The goal is to have a balanced program."

"The goal is to have a balanced program."
–Lisa Roncaioli

The day usually starts with some free play. That might include doing puzzles, coloring or playing with LEGOs. Every session also includes circle time.

"That consists of spelling their names. We go over the month, the day, the year. We count the days in the week. One of the things I like to do with the kids is introduce them to the concept of math," Roncaioli said.

That might be something such as talking about seven days in the week, showing five on one hand and two on the other.

"I use terms like addition and subtraction, so they get used to hearing these words. When they go into kindergarten and first grade, they're familiar to them," she said.

Every day, the class reads a story. The teachers ask a lot of questions to make sure the children are comprehending what they're reading. There's also silent reading time. Roncaioli hears a common comment.

"They'll say, 'Miss Lisa, I don't know how to read,'" she said with a laugh. "I say to look at the pictures and make up your own stories."

Later, when the book is read in class, the children find out if the story matches the one they envisioned.

"It's pre-steps in teaching them how to read," she said.

There's also playtime, either outside in the good weather or in the community center's gym.

"Each day follows the same routine," Roncaioli said.

They do a science project a few days a week, such as making a volcano by adding peroxide to baking soda, or experimenting with how

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EDUCATION

oil and water don't mix.

"They love it," she said.

School started right after Labor Day and will continue until a week before the public school year ends. Slots in the school are available both to residents and those from out of town and are awarded based on a lottery. There is a waiting list.

There are two staff people for each class. The location ensures that there are always extra hands on deck if needed.

"The nice thing about the program being where it is is that we also get the support of the community center staff. If for some reason we need another person in the room, we can call someone in from the office and they come in for five or 10 minutes," Roncaioli said.

"The office staff is always checking in on us. While there's only two actual teachers in the classroom, we pretty much have the support of all the workers in the building who are looking out for us."

Parents are welcome to visit their children at any time.

"We have an open door policy for parents. I basically tell them, even if the door is closed, you can come in unannounced. You don't need to make an appointment. There's nothing to hide," she said.

While Roncaioli has taught at every level from elementary to high school she is enjoying the youngest students.

"I love it because it's never the same thing every day. I love that when working with kids, they're so brutally honest and eager to learn. And if they're bored, they'll let you know," she said.

"I kind of like that when you're working with children, even the best-laid plans can go astray. You don't really know what every day is going to be like. You can go in with an agenda in mind and see they're really excited about one piece of lesson," she added.

"Then we're going to focus and go even further with them. I love what I do. I made it my goal when I started teaching to look upon every kid as if they were my own." **RH&CL**

Photos by Lisa Brisson

Lisa Roncaioli, director of the Kids Korner Preschool program, chats with Ayushmaan Sharma and Adwick Kapoor, both 4, during their lunch break.

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New ball field for all abilities opens at Elm Ridge Park

by Mark Jahne
Editor

The community took another step forward in its growing commitment to children with special needs Sept. 16 with the official opening of the new Miracle Field of Rocky Hill at Elm Ridge Park.

More than 200 people watched as town officials and young athletes cut the ribbon and shortly thereafter kicked off the first use of the field with a Wiffle Ball game. The Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Department provided a formal color guard.

Photo by Lisa Brisson

Sebby Sorrentino, director of Rocky Hill Little League Challenger Baseball, helps Noah Cosker, 8, with his at bat during the Sept. 16 dedication ceremony of the new Miracle Field of Rocky Hill.

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Photo by Lisa Brisson

Local and state officials, as well Little League officials, all partake in the ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Challenger athletes.

The new field, located between the baseball fields and swimming pool in the center of the park, is designed to be used primarily for baseball and softball. It is completely flat, including the bases, and made of a soft and slightly spongy material to help protect players from injuries. Children who use walkers and wheelchairs are able to participate.

Brian Dillon, the father of a special athlete, served as the evening's master of ceremonies. He is one of several Miracle Field committee members who saw the process through to completion from when it was first proposed a few years ago.

Dillon deflected any praise for his own work by saying "I get my best ideas from my wife." He gave credit to the current and previous Town Councils and particularly former council member Bill MacDonald.

"Rocky Hill has been a strong supporter of the Challenger program," Dillon added.

Challenger Baseball is a division of Little League in which children of all abilities play baseball together, often with teenagers and adults as mentors. Sebby Sorrentino, who is involved with multiple special needs sports programs in town, then introduced all of the uniformed players to the audience.

"The new field really represents the community coming together to fill the need for programs to support our kids with special needs. The location is also key to the other fields, now representing an area for our special athletes to have a space, just like baseball and softball," Sorrentino said.

It takes money to make a project like this advance from a dream to a reality and that came from the efforts of state Rep. Tony Guerrera and state Sen. Paul Doyle, who both briefly spoke at the ceremony. They secured an $800,000 state grant.

Lisa Zerio, director of parks and recreation, said the grant not only paid for the new field, but for the fence, sidewalks and a future play area.

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Photos by Lisa Brisson

David Brann, 7, hits the ball off the tee during a Whiffle Ball game that followed the dedication ceremony.

Scott Burness, 14, waits for the first pitch to be thrown with his father, Joe.

"None of this would have happened without their assistance," Dillon said of the legislators.

"This would never have come without the efforts of the volunteers," Mayor Claudia Baio added.

"I am so proud to be a resident of this community ... this has to be one of the best fields we've ever done," Guerrera said. "When children of all abilities get together, it's amazing what happens."

"It really is a beautiful Miracle Field," Doyle added.

"Congratulations to everybody involved with the creation of this field," Amry Shelby said.

He is the assistant region director for the east region of Little League International. The new field was designed by the BSC Group of Boston, with a local office in Glastonbury.

Rocky Hill already has several sports-oriented programs for children with special needs: Challenger baseball, Sea Cubs swimming, Sidekicks Soccer and Summer Knights. Miracle Field is a trademark name of the Miracle League and Rocky Hill is a member of that organization. **RH&CL**

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Focus on fitness

Expert advice for women of all ages

by Lynn Woike
LIFE Staff

Exercise is an important part of any person's regular routine.

Swimming, biking, hiking, yoga: everyone has a personal preference of how they liketo stay in shape.

When planning an exercise regimen, in addition to choosing something that will keep one motivated, it's important to consider the physiological needs of the body as it ages.

"For women in their 20s, a lifestyle that includes regular exercise and daily activity is vital," said Jennifer Braun, a certified physical therapist at Anytime Fitness in West Hartford.

"Exercise regimens should include a combination of strength, cardiovascular and metabolic accelerated resistance training for a well-rounded program. Strength is especially important for maintaining strong and healthy bones and setting the body up for prevention of osteoporosis as women age.

"Women have a higher risk of developing osteoporosis – the breakdown of bone to become fragile due to loss of bone tissue. When strength training is started in their 20s and maintained, women are less likely to develop osteoporosis early on and can maintain a more active lifestyle," Braun said.

As years pass and life gets more complicated, it can be difficult to stay on track. Exercise may become less of a priority, but women are encouraged to fight that trend.

"Most fitness trainers say that a comprehensive wellness program includes cardio two to three days per week, strength training a minimum of two days per week and stretching seven days per week. But 30-somethings are busy with careers, families, and homes, so their time is precious, to say the least," said Maggie Durbas, who has a personal training background and owns Journey of Yoga LLC in Simsbury.

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Just *for Women*

She recommends yoga for busy women in their 30s.

"If time is an issue, practicing yoga for an hour two to three times a week can do triple duty and help with strengthening, stretching and even cardio, never mind the myriad of other health benefits," she said.

"Yoga is far more than simply stretching. Depending on the type of class, it can definitely be considered strength training."

"For example, power and vinyasa both can be strengthening, if the poses are challenging and held for at least 30 seconds. If the vinyasa class is flowing the entire time, like Ashtanga – from which vinyasa was derived – it can also be a cardiovascular workout."

Durbas tells the story of a woman who, because of an injury, used only yoga to train for "her umpteenth triathlon."

"Because of the vinyasa flowing movement, she got the cardio she needed for running and biking, chair and warrior poses prepared her quads for biking and the rhythmic breathing prepared her for swimming. She completed the triathlon close to the same time she had done the prior year," Durbas said.

Your 40s are a time you should be focused on becoming your healthiest, said Kevin Kosis, a certified exercise physiologist with a bachelor's degree in exercise science at Designed Training in Glastonbury.

"Your 40s arewhen your body starts to go through changes. For women especially, premenopausal levels start to change, calcium levels and bone density start to drop off. Osteoporosis rates nearly double after 40, breast cancer rates exponentially rise after 40, and cardiovascular risk factors elevate after 45. But there's an easy fix for that: exercise," he said.

He recommends starting with squats three times a week, using light weights and doing three sets of 15 repetitions each.

"Slowly start increasing weight when you're comfortable and decrease to 10 repetitions," Kosis said.

Studies regarding preventative care in breast cancer show physically active people are less likely to receive a diagnosis and High Intensity Interval Training has proven to be beneficial.

Decreasing stress levels will also do wonders, and again exercise helps with that, he said, adding that a healthy diet is also important to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

As women age into and beyond menopausal years, exercise continues to be a key to staying healthy as well as warding off other illnesses and staying mentally sharp.

According to Peter Asadourian of Future Fitness Sport Specific Training, no matter what age you are, "the hardest thing to do is to start a training program."

Different anxieties may come into play, but it's important to approach the task at hand with the right mindset.

Those in older age groups should not fall victim to the belief that it is too late for them to start a new, healthy routine.

"When starting that training program, you need to take some gradual steps," he said. "Set goals for yourself, where you want to be in a few months, etc."

"Find out what you can do and know your limits. If you are able to do movements with great form and you are breathing comfortably and there is no pain, then you can do it. Just because you are 50 or 60-plus years old does not mean you can't do what a 20-year-old is doing."

It's important when joining a gym to be sure a trainer is providing appropriate guidance and movements are being modified to one's personal abilities, Asadourian said.

"Taking part in a fitness program, especially as we get into our 50s and 60s is very beneficial," he said. "We want our bones and muscles to stay strong to avoid injury and other health issues. Exercise is the answer to a lot of everyday health issues."

Its easy to start; your first move is to get up off the chair." **RH&CL**

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Just *for Women*

Why I wear PINK

Breast cancer color is personal for many

Compiled by Mara Dresner & Alicia Smith

It's hard to miss the pink during Breast Cancer Awareness month in October. Many people go pink just to show support or raise awareness for a good cause. But for others, wearing pink has a much more personal meaning. We spoke to readers to find out why they wear pink.

Gail Wiley Richey
Cromwell

My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1976 at age 38. She spent time in and out of the hospital having surgery, chemo, radiation, blood transfusions and other necessary treatment. On June 16, 1981, at 43 years of age, she passed away leaving her husband and six young children.

My sister, Sharon, was diagnosed with breast cancer in November 2000, Stage 1. Three short months later, cancer spread to her lungs, brain and spleen, Stage IV. It was aggressive cancer and doctors gave her no longer than two weeks to two months to live. Sharon fought, enduring continual radiation, chemotherapy, blood transfusions, MRIs, CAT scans, blood test, etc. She was sick and she was sad and yet she was so strong. Sharon passed away, September 5, 2001, one month after her 41st birthday, leaving her husband and two young children.

Since my mother's diagnosis, I have worn pink to support breast cancer awareness, walked miles at relays and multiple races, given speeches, attended charity functions and raised money to support research.

I wear pink to honor the memory of my mother and sister and now proudly for myself. On March 18, 2015, I heard the words "it's cancer." While it appeared early, after a double mastectomy, I was told Stage III, aggressive cancer. I've survived chemo, a full hysterectomy, radiation, and I am participating in a clinical trial for the benefit of myself and others.

My daughter, like myself, has tested positive for the BRAC1 gene. My heart breaks that this disease could harm her, too. Progress is made by keeping people aware and focused on a cure. For my daughter, for you and, yes, for me, I wear pink.

Gina Uricchio
Rocky Hill

"Before I was diagnosed with breast cancer, pink was truly just a pretty color that most little girls wear a lot of. A lover of fashion, I wore pink on Valentine's Day and paired pink oxfords with jeans as my "go to" outfit.

As a survivor now, I see the color from such a different perspective.

I wear pink in October for so many reasons. The color pink applies to so many different types of women I know. And like the fashion color, I apply these to the women in my life and our world. I wear carnation pink for the survivors before me, those who fought hard and strong and didn't have the medicine available to us like the lucky ones today. For my grandmothers who loved the color and would have proudly wore this to support their granddaughter. I wear bold magenta pink for my fellow survivors, my peers. To the moms being diagnosed daily, and for some of the most beautiful, kindest women who have come into my life because of cancer.

I wear blush pink for my father, who wore a pink bracelet every day, and my husband, who fielded every doctor's call and pathology report, and fearlessly lead our family through it all.

I wear bubblegum pink for my son, who wore pink Nikes during my surgeries. For my daughter, who, along with her classmates, made meals for our family. For my nieces and the sweet young women and teens who are supporting us all with bracelets and pink stripes on their hair. I wear champagne pink for the caregivers. My sister, who created a CaringBridge for me. For my mom, who moved in my house to take care of my family, and to all the people who stand valiantly behind their person.

Lastly, I wear rose pink for Pink Yoga, created by my "sister survivor" Kristina Giliberto (of Glastonbury), yoga classes for survivors and those in treatment, a community that supports your diagnosis and the "afterlife" with self-care. Together now, we teach yoga and self-care workshops to women navigating life after diagnosis." **RH&CL**

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Just *for Women*

What nutrition professionals eat

Pie and candy have place on the menu

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Every day there seems to be a new diet book or plan that everyone is talking about. Figuring out what's best to eat can be a challenge. So LIFE went to the source to ask some health professionals what they eat on a typical day. While everyone's nutritional needs are different, you might find inspiration with these real-world sample menus.

Linda York, a Registered Dietician/Certified Diabetes Educator with the UConn Health outpatient department, noted that exercise is crucial to maintaining a healthy weight. "Exercise is medicine," she said, advocating for a half hour of aerobic exercise each day. "If you do anything extra, that's great, but at least half an hour. If you think of it as medicine, it becomes a habit. You will maintain your weight so you can eat something you want."

That includes sweets and other treats. York said she is careful not to keep trigger foods in the house. "I tend not to keep anything in the house that I really like. I tend to go out and get it," she said of her favorite treats. She also drinks a lot of water.

Breakfast: Two slices raisin toast, one teaspoon of Smart Balance margarine. A cup of coffee with skim milk, no sugar. Or a cup of old-fashioned oatmeal with one teaspoon of brown sugar and one-half cup of skim milk and frozen berries or a sliced banana, with coffee. On weekends, she enjoys omelets with two large eggs, vegetables, hot sauce and Cabot light cheese with two slices toast with Smart Balance margarine.

Lunch: A "big" salad with two to three cups of vegetables, as well as one-half to one cup of fruit, and protein, such as chicken or tuna. No dressing. She also enjoys "some kind of starch," for example croutons or a small bag of Cape Cod reduced-fat chips.

Snack: If she wants something sweet, she'll have a Quaker Oat 90-calorie granola bar with coffee. She tries to stay under 150 calories for the snack.

Dinner: York's biggest meal. Most days she'll enjoy four ounces of wine with dinner, which is often a pasta dish with tomato sauce without any meat. She'll do a quick stir fry with eggplant to add to the sauce, which she'll season with fresh basil, garlic powder and Italian seasoning, topped with fresh Parmesan.

She admits to liking white pasta and usually chooses linguini. On other days, she'll make a lemon chicken, cooked in a little oil, which she'll have along with a carb, such as pasta, a potato or sweet potato, along with half a plate of cooked vegetables, such as broccoli or asparagus, which might be frozen or fresh. She also enjoys poached salmon.

Snack: Around 9 p.m., she'll have a Chobani Greek yogurt, such as black cherry or coconut. She might also have another bag of Cape Cod chips. Once in a while, she'll enjoy a Fudgsicle or small ice cream sandwich. "If I'm still hungry I have a cup of tea," she said.

Favorite treat: Pie, such as blueberry pie. "But I wouldn't have the whole thing in the house; I love it so much!" she said. She also enjoys French cheeses. "You just have to have control and make sure you don't have a lot of that stuff in the house."

Renée J. Bordeaux, a registered dietitian (RD), Certified dietitian-nutritionist (CD-N) and certified personal trainer (CPT), is owner and president of Bordeaux Nutrition in Newington (bordeaux-nutrition.com). She is a fan of "Paleo Diet" as outlined by Dr. Loren Cordain, Ph.D.

"I have added my own twist, coining the phrase Paleoesque when working with clients who are transitioning stepwise from a typical high-carb American diet to a healthier, paleo-centric lifestyle. 'Paleo' refers to the Paleolithic era approximately 10,000 years ago when humans were still hunter-gatherers, before the age of agriculture and increased grains in our diet. Once humans began to increase grains in our diet, we began to see increased digestive diseases and inflammation which is the very basis of disease," she explained. "My biggest tip for women's nutrition is to go Paleo. A Paleo diet focuses on nutrient-dense, lower-carb foods that are anti-inflammatory. Women are at higher risk for developing inflammatory/autoimmune conditions. Following a Paleo lifestyle will decrease these risks."

Breakfast: Her "Caveman Cereal:" one-half cup of fruit such as applesauce or berries or one medium banana with one-quarter to one-third cup nuts or seeds (any nuts except for peanuts, which she noted are "legumes that are inflammatory and not nuts") for protein and an

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Just *for Women*

omega fat source.

On other days, she will have five to six ounces of leftover grass-fed beef, chicken or pork with one to two cups of leftover vegetables, such as spaghetti squash or acorn squash. If she's having a lower-carb veggie, such as spinach, she'll add about a half-cup of fruit.

She also drinks coffee with almond milk.

Snack: Two tablespoons of nuts/seeds or one-half cup fruit with one tablespoon of nuts/seeds or half an avocado with grape tomatoes. She drinks water or herbal tea.

Lunch: Five to six ounces of leftover grass-fed beef, pork, chicken, fish, tuna fish or seafood with approximately two cups of non-starchy vegetables (spinach, broccoli, cauliflower or greens) with approximately one-half cup starchy veg such as winter squash, beets, carrots or Brussels sprouts. Vegetables are drizzled with one to two tablespoons of olive, coconut or sesame seed oil for flavor.

Snack: Two tablespoon nuts/seeds or one-half cup fruit. Occasionally, she will have one square of gluten-free, dairy-free 80 percent cocoa chocolate with one tablespoon almonds. Also, water, decaf coffee with almond milk or herbal tea.

Dinner: Very similar to lunch with one glass of wine.

Favorite treat: One-half cup of gluten-free, dairy-free coconut or almond based "ice cream" with nuts or two gluten-free, dairy-free cookies, from Pamela's Products or Aleia's. Another favorite treat is gluten-free, dairy-free dark chocolate "bark thins."

Natalie Kebalo, MS, RDN (Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist) at Hartford HealthCare, Jefferson House in Newington, advises, "Get back to the basics as much as you can. Cooking at home with fresh ingredients that are not processed will eliminate the extra calories, fat, sugar and additives, such as artificial colors or flavors, that people are much more conscious of today than ever before."

She usually drinks at least eight cups of water per day, mostly between meals.

Breakfast: Brewed coffee with 2 percent milk, one cup of water, two boiled eggs, wheat toast (Freihofer's 100 percent Whole Wheat Bread), two kiwi fruits.

Lunch: Mixed salad greens with leftover grilled steak, tomatoes, half of an avocado and one tablespoon of Italian dressing. One cup of water.

Snack: Whole milk Greek Yogurt from Stop & Shop with a teaspoon of honey.

Dinner: "Spaghetti" (noodles made from yellow squash using a Veggetti spiralizer) sautéed with olive oil and diced garlic, with homemade tomato sauce and meatballs (made with half turkey and half beef), one tablespoon of grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese from Stew Leonard's, one cup of water.

"I love fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season, like the yellow squash, peaches, and tomatoes," she said.

"They are much more tasteful and usually cheaper in the supermarket or farmers market."

Dessert/Snack: Soft-serve vanilla/chocolate ice cream from the local dairy bar. She gets a kid-sized "since they love to give extra" and a fresh peach. RH&CL

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October calendar

1 **Book Sale,** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Cromwell Belden Public Library, 41 West St., 860-632-3460 or cromwellct.com

Friends of the Library Book Sale, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, 33 Church St., Rocky Hill, 860-258-7623 or rockyhilllibrary.info

2 **Friends of the Library Fill a Bag Book Sale**, noon to 4 p.m., $7 per bag, Cora J. Belden Library

3 **Cr-afternoon,** 4:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 17

Cromwell Fire District Election, 5:30 p.m., town hall, 41 West St., cromwellfiredistrict.org

SCORE Small Business Counseling, 12:30-4:30 p.m., registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

Family Story Time, 6:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 17, 24 and 31

4 **Fun for Ones,** 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 11, 18 and 25

Knitting Group, 11 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 11, 18 and 25

Google Computer Science Workshop, 4 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 11, 18 and 25

5 **Playgroup Plus,** 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 12, 19 and 26

Books & Babies, 10:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 12, 19 and 26

On Our Own Preschool Storytime, 1 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 12, 19 and 26

Adult Coloring, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 12, 19 and 26

6 **La Leche League,** 10 a.m. to noon, 23 Textbook Ave., Rocky Hill, 860-529-2307 or mgubala@sbcglobal.net

Toddler Time, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 13, 20 and 27

English as a Second Language, 10:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Minecraft Club, 4 p.m., for grades 2-5, Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 13, 20 and 27

Family Make It, Take It, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library., also Oct. 13, 20 and 27

10 **Town Council,** 7 p.m., Cromwell Town Hall, 41 West St., cromwellct.com

11 **Flu Clinic,** 9 a.m. to noon, Rocky Hill Community Center, 55 Church St., 860-721-2822 or ccthd.org, also 2:30-6 p.m. Oct. 12

12 **Mystery Book Discussion,** 6:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

13 **6 Minecraft Club,** 6:30 p.m., for grades 6-12, Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 13, 20 and 27

15 **Board Game Club,** noon, for grades 6-12 and adults, Cora J. Belden Library

18 **Jim Scianna Jazz Trio in concert,** 6:30 p.m., registration requested, Cora J. Belden Library

21 **LEGO Free Play,** 10:30 a.m. to noon, for ages 2 and older with an adult, Cora J. Belden Library

22 **Halloween on Main,** 4-8 p.m., downtown Cromwell, cromwellmerchantsassociation.com

24 **Joint Meeting of the Town Council, Board of Education and Board of Finance,** 7 p.m., Cromwell Town Hall

25 **Northeast Paranormal Investigations Society,** 6:30 p.m., registration requested, Cora J. Belden Library

26 **Medicare Made Clear Seminar,** 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Is your club, organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

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What a great deal at this price for a great vintage 3BR Col with a New Remodeled Gourmet Kit!! 1.1 baths, Hdwd Flrs, Deck, Shed, Fenced in yard w/huge side lot! Come see!

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860-324-3702

Karen Parker
860-796-5833

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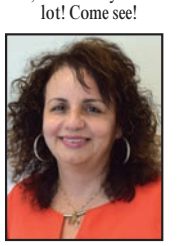
860-881-8500



Bea Goddard
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Kathy Dell'Aquila
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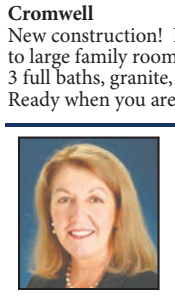
Cromwell **$434,900**
New construction! Kitchen open to large family room. 4 bedrms, 3 full baths, granite, HW floors. Ready when you are!

Rocky Hill **$176,900**
Spacious condo with 2 bedrooms, 2 full baths, large living room/ dining room w/cathedral ceiling, fireplace. Includes 1-car garage!



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Featured Properties

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NEW BRITAIN - 4BR 2 full bath Cape in a great location. Hardwood floors, new gas furnace, private and level backyard. **$175,000**

BERLIN - Luxury condo with all the bells and whistles. 2BRs 2 baths, garage, central air, high end upgrades, huge deck, beautiful views. **$253,900**

NEWINGTON - Move in ready 3BR 2.5 bath home built in 2001. Large eat in kitchen with granite, central air, walk out basement. **$259,900**

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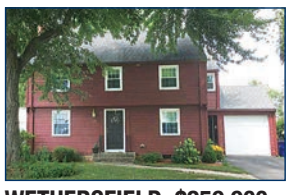

WETHERSFIELD $259,900
Reduced! 3BD, updated kitchen open to family rm. Established neighborhood. HW Floors, Fireplace.
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WETHERSFIELD $389,900
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860.305.8904

WETHERSFIELD $229,900
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John Gerardi
860.983.4427

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LISA MARTIN **(860) 558-3956**

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ROCKY HILL **$519,900**
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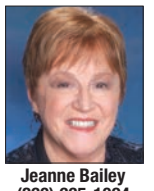
HARTFORD **$152,000**
Unique opportunity to own! 4 bdrms, gas heat/CA. 2 car garage. Brand new construction. Below market price.
JOSEPH MARRERO II **(860) 3061235**



Jeanne Bailey
(860) 665-1094

Brian A. Deperry
(860) 874-2533

Alicia Deperry
(860) 424-2572

Lisa Martin
(860) 558-3956

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WETHERSFIELD **$199,900**
Oversized yard, in a quiet area. Two bedroom ranch with extra-large FP living room. Wood flrs. Gas heat/central air. Newer roof and windows.
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WETHERSFIELD **$159,000**
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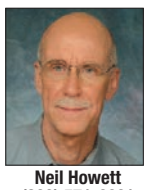
(860) 989-5488

Angela Aiello-Sousa
(860) 305-5585



Neil Howett
(860) 571-6661

E. HARTFORD **$139,900**
CHARMER. Steps from park and Glastonbury line. 3 oversized BD. Fireplace living room. Large yard.
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rocky hill LIFE

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Editorial

Save a pet and save yourself, too

A popular bumper sticker reads "Who rescued who?" It refers to people who have decided to adopt an abandoned or otherwise available cat or dog and found it to be a wonderful, enriching experience.

Rescuing pets is becoming an increasingly popular activity. They might have been abused, abandoned, or given up because their owners could no longer care for them. Perhaps someone developed an allergy to a pet's fur or dander.

Whatever the reason, adoptable pets went from homes into shelters and suddenly found themselves living in cages with a limited amount of attention from the human staff and volunteers.

They didn't do anything wrong, so they must wonder how they ended up in such a predicament.

Pets provide such a great deal of warmth and joy. They are always affectionate, even when the people they live with are not. They offer unrequited love, a quality often hard to find in people. They can soothe us when we are sad and perk us up when we are sick.

The selection is not limited to cats and dogs. Visit the Connecticut Humane Society in Newington on any given day and there may be exotic birds, rabbits, chinchillas and other animals available for the taking.

Puppies and kittens are cute and tend to be adopted more quickly, but there's a special reward in adopting an older, ill or mixed-breed pet. Some of them may have medical needs but can live long and happy lives with a certain amount of care.

Learning how to love and care for a pet is a wonderful experience for children. It's also nice for senior citizens who may benefit from having a four-legged companion around the house.

Speaking of seniors, how about adopting an older animal? They may not be as cute as the little ones, but they still have love to give. What a wonderful thing it is when someone rescues an older animal from a shelter or other organization and allows it to live out its remaining days in happiness and comfort.

The Connecticut Humane Society and other area shelters are always looking for families to give an animal a new "forever" home. Adopting a dog or cat may also prove a way to improve life for everyone in the home.

Who rescued who, indeed.

Letters

Will vote for Guerrera

To the Editor:

This is one of the reasons why I intend to vote for Tony Guerrera's re-election as state representative in the 29th Assembly District. Ever since the 2008 recession, America's worst in more than three-quarters of a century, Tony has had to make many challenging decisions to help Connecticut get back on track.

At the same time, he has remained true to the needs and concerns of his constituents in Rocky Hill, Newington and Wethersfield.

Among other things, Tony brought home to Rocky Hill $800,000 for the Miracle League field at Elm Ridge Park, which will open new opportunities to children of all abilities; $440,000 for a new playing field at the high school; $180,000 for upgrades at Dinosaur State Park; as well as helping secure $1 million for open space on Newington's Cedar Mountain and $500,000 for upgrades at Wethersfield's Mill Woods Park.

For all he has accomplished, and for his willingness to answer the time-consuming call of public service, he deserves our support. Please join me in casting your vote for Tony Guerrera on Nov. 8.

– *Sandra B. Chandler*

Also support Guerrera

To the Editor:

Over the past 16 years when Tony Guerrera has served as state representative for Rocky Hill, Wethersfield and Newington, he has proven time and time again that when one of his towns asks for help, he delivers.

Case in point – a renewable energy company wants to develop a solar energy farm in Rocky Hill's industrial park. However, the Rocky Hill project was stymied because existing state law placed a cap on the amount of clean energy credits Eversource Energy could accept and that cap had been reached.

The solution? New legislation to expand the cap, creating room for the Rocky Hill project, legislation that would, at best, be difficult to pass.

The town appealed to Tony for help and he immediately put his time and energy into wining approval for this legislation. With the help of state Sen. Paul Doyle, Tony succeeded in securing passage for the expanded cap.

The result? The solar project is ready to go. What will it mean for Rocky Hill? This project has the potential of providing more than 90 percent of the electricity needed to power the town's public buildings and schools.

This will save Rocky Hill taxpayers approximately $7.2 million over the next two decades and it will substantially increase the town's commitment to clean energy.

Once again, Tony delivered, and Rocky Hill taxpayers will benefit, one more reason why voters need to support the dedicated and hard-working Tony Guerrera for re-election on Nov. 8.

– *Wendell and Susan Coogan*

News roundup

Remembering the victims

The town held its annual observance of the 2001 terror attacks outside the fire station on Old Main Street the afternoon of Sept. 11. It was the 15th anniversary of the attacks on the Pentagon, World Trade Center and an airplane over Shanksville, Penn.

Fire department chaplains William Veinot and Ronald Cox provided the invocation and benediction, respectively. There were thoughts and reflections, a moment of silence and a wreath presentation. Poetry was recited by Meg Markwith of the Hartt School at the University of Hartford.

Referendums on ballot

In addition to casting their votes for president, Congress and the state legislature, Rocky Hill voters will also be asked to express their support for two referendums seeking money for civic improvement projects.

The first referendum question asks whether voters approve of spending $1.3 million for the town to purchase street lights and utility poles, as well as the installation of energy-conserving lighting. Other towns have purchased poles and lights from the utility companies as a cost-saving measure.

The second question asks whether voters approve the appropriation of $48.35 million to construct a new intermediate school to alleviate overcrowding in the two elementary schools. The law requires that the full estimated cost of the project be voted on, but if the project goes forward, $17.2 million will be reimbursed by the state, leaving the town to pay the remaining $31.15 million.

Man dies in crash

One person was killed and two others were hospitalized in a collision involving a car and two motorcycles the afternoon of Sept. 10 on Cromwell Avenue near the Rocky Hill/Cromwell town line. Police believe the two motorcycles heading south for some reason crossed the dividing line into the northbound lane and were struck by the car.

This accident is being investigated and reconstructed by the Mid-State Accident Reconstruction Team with the assistance of the Rocky Hill Police Department Criminal Investigations Unit.

The deceased motorcyclist was identified by police as Matthew J. Lanza, 37, of Cromwell. Lanza died as a result of his injuries after being transported to Hartford Hospital.

The second motorcyclist was identified as Ronald A. McNeill Jr., 50, from Middletown. The car was driven by Pamela R. Hebb, 59, of Rocky Hill.

Town gets two grants

The state Department of Transportation, through its Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program, committed $1,015,200 in federal funds to the town to mill and pave Old Forge Road. In a competitive application process, the town's engineering staff prepared the required plans and application, which was submitted to the Capital Region Council of Governments in January.

It was one of five projects to be selected out of 14 submitted. The engineering staff is now in the final design stage, preparing the plans and specifications with the intention of bidding the project this year. This is the fifth such project for which the engineering staff has been able to secure state and federal funding since 2005, totaling more than $5.5 million.

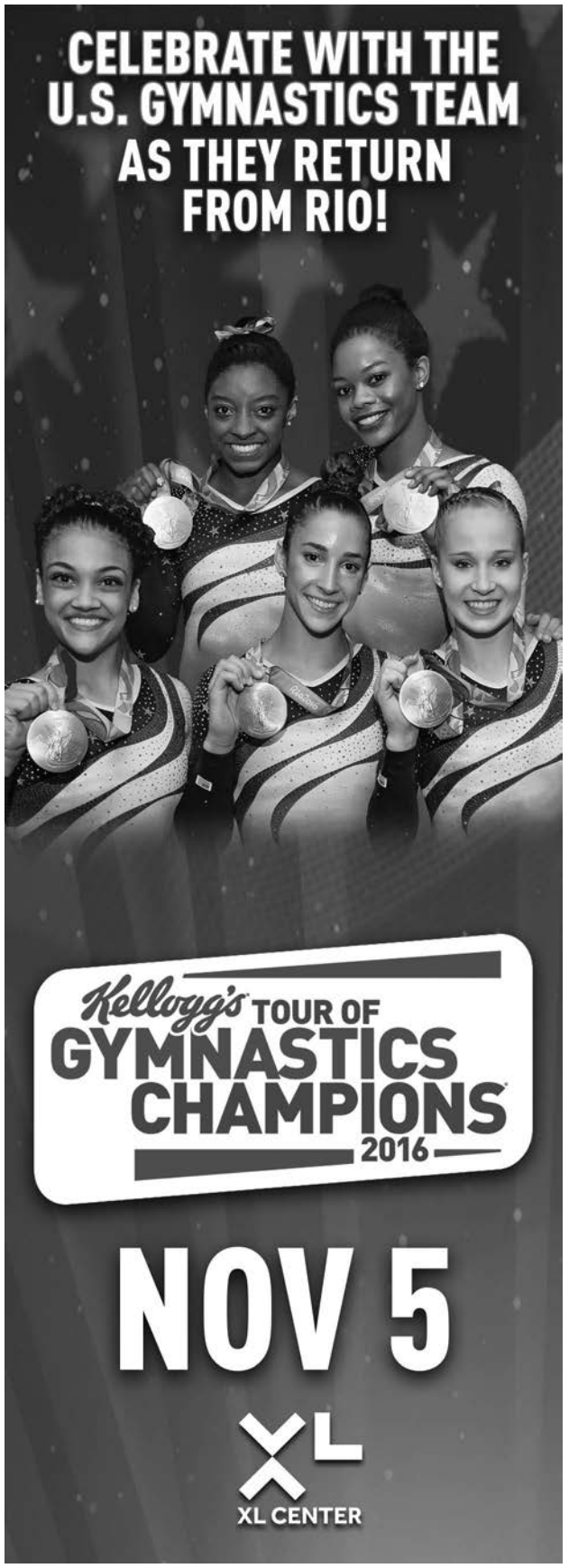
The DOT also awarded the town a grant for $366,580 (50 percent of the total cost) through its local bridge program for the replacement of the France Street culvert over the Sawmill River in the vicinity of Farmstead Lane. The consulting firm of Cardinal Engineering of Meriden is preparing the plans and specifications for a spring 2017 bid date.

With this total state commitment of $1,381,780, the town will be able to stretch its initial $10 million referendum to include roads that were not originally scheduled for paving in the first five-year plan.

AARP tax aides sought

The AARP Foundation Tax-Aide program is looking for local volunteers for its tax preparation program. They are asked to give a few hours each week during the tax season to help low-income and moderate-income taxpayers prepare and file their federal and state tax returns, ensuring that they receive the tax credits and deductions they deserve.

Jobs including greeters, counselors and electronic return originators. Training is provided. To learn more, or to register as a volunteer, visit aarp.org/taxaide. **RHL**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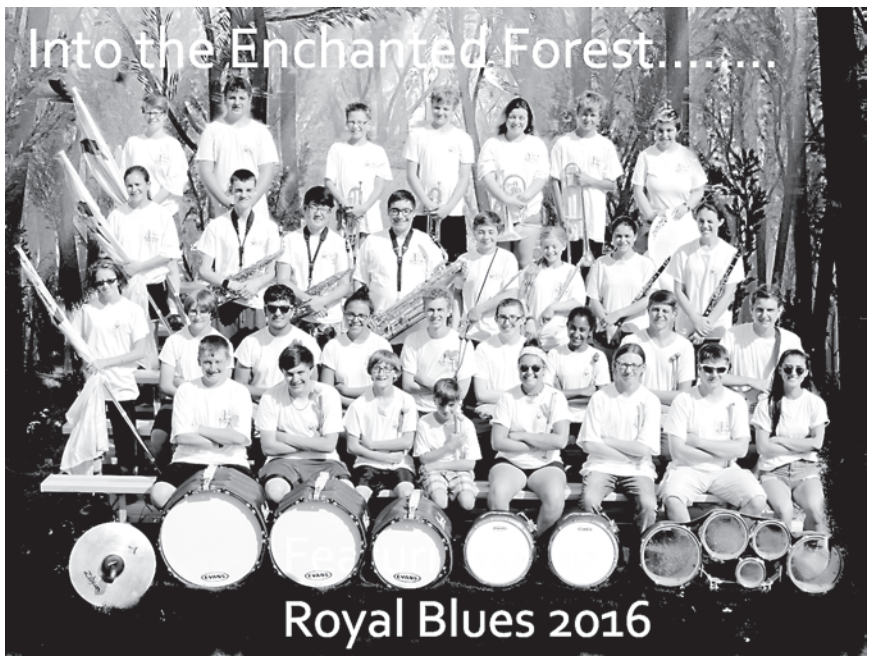

Royal Blues Invitational

Sept. 24, 3 p.m.
Rocky Hill High School
50 Chapin Ave.
rockyhillps.com
$10 general admission
$5 senior citizens and students

The Rocky Hill High School Royal Blues marching band hosts its 18th annual Invitational entitled "Into the Enchanted Forest" featuring music by Maurice Ravel. The Central Connecticut State University Blue Devil Marching Band will also perform. This year's band is led by drum major Isabella Colasacco and section leaders, principal players and captains Juliana Binder, Cameron Cheyney, Ryan Cormier, Sarah Freitas, Connor Gagne, Nathan Gerace-Hicks, Sarah Mitchell, Christi Montalbano and Bree O'Connor.

Friends of the Library Book Sale

Oct. 1, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Cora J. Belden Library
33 Church St.
860-258-7623 or
rockyhilllibrary.info

The Friends of the Cora J. Belden Library will be hold their sale on the lower level of the library. Members of the Friends are eligible for early admission at 10 a.m. Thousands of books will be on sale and all proceeds will benefit the library. A "Fill a Bag" book sale takes place from noon to 4 p.m. Oct. 2 at a cost of $7 a bag.

Jim Scianna Jazz Trio

Oct. 18, 6:30 p.m.
Cora J. Belden Library
33 Church St.
860-258-7623 or
rockyhilllibrary.info

This jazz concert features the Jim Scianna Jazz Trio with Jim Scianna on bass, Matt DeChamplain on piano and the vocals of Atla DeChamplain. They perform songs by music greats like Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Billie Holiday and Bing Crosby. Registration is requested. This concert is sponsored by the Friends of the Cora J. Belden Library. **RHL**

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Medicaid Coordinator - 32 hour opening for someone with solid bookkeeping background. Must have strong customer service skills and a thorough knowledge of Medicare and Medicaid regulations as they apply to skilled nursing. Previous experience with electronic billing transmission required.

Help Wanted

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Certified Nurse Aides – only a few openings remain on the evening shift. Must have previous experience in long term care and/or assisted living.

Therapeutic Recreation – 40 hours a week to lead groups for those with dementia along with program facilitation and planning. Must have previous TR experience – preferably certification.

Certified Nurse Aide Training Class – October 17 through November 4. Must be available full time Monday through Friday. Please call for an application as seats in the class are limited. 860-658-3940. You may also e-mail your interest to employment@mcleancare.org

Dietary Team Leader – 32 hours weekly 10:30am-7:00pm 4 days a week. Must have excellent customer service skills along with previous serving experience. Act as a lead person in the dining room for lunch and dinner service. Nice schedule along with benefits.

Kitchen Utility Worker/Driver – Monday-Friday 9-12. Cleaning of kitchen areas, mopping and stocking duties. Drive meals to a coordination site.

MCLEAN HUMAN RESOURCES - 860-658-3724. SIMSBURY, CT EOE

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OFFICE ASSISTANT-Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage is currently looking for an Office Assistant to work in the Glastonbury office. Must have 2+ years of customer service, administrative experience and proficient in MS Office Suite and social media platforms. Real Estate experience preferred. To view more and apply, please go to https://jobs.realogy.com and search for 32227. NRT/Coldwell Banker is EOE/M/F/D/V.

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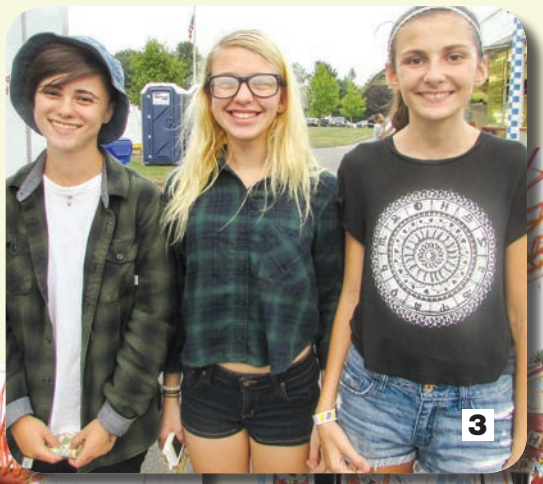
Slice of LIFE

photos by Allie Rivera

The Rocky Hill Lions Club held its annual carnival the weekend of Sept. 8-10 at Elm Ridge Park. Admission was free and there were a variety of rides and games. Proceeds will go to scholarships, the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, the Eye Research Foundation and other places.



Lion Club Annual Carnival

1. Brothers Dante, 2, and Luca Pierleoni took a “boat” ride. **2.** Six-year-old Valentina Rodundo and her 9-year-old sister Isabella used the carnival as an excuse to chow down on some cotton candy. **3.** It was a nice night out for Nicole Nocida, 14, Alexandra Podgorska, 13 and Anela Korkutovic, 13. **4.** Eleven-year-old Olivia Crawford came to the carnival with her mother, stopping in front of the swings. **5.** Friends Alana Koskovich, 13, Emily Brennan, 12, Danielle DiCiccio, 12, and Marija Ducki, 13, from left, were excited to attend the carnival. **6.** Sebastian Cannamela spent the evening at the carnival with his daughter, Sofia, 6. **7.** Kayla Lajoy, 9, left, and her sister Kylie, 8, held on tightly on the Scrambler ride. **8.** Two-year-old Sage Mattson concentrated hard on her driving. **9.** Sadie Vignone and Evie Aylward, both 2, were all smiles on the carousel with their mothers Regina Vignone, left, and Laura Aylward, right.

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Scrambler

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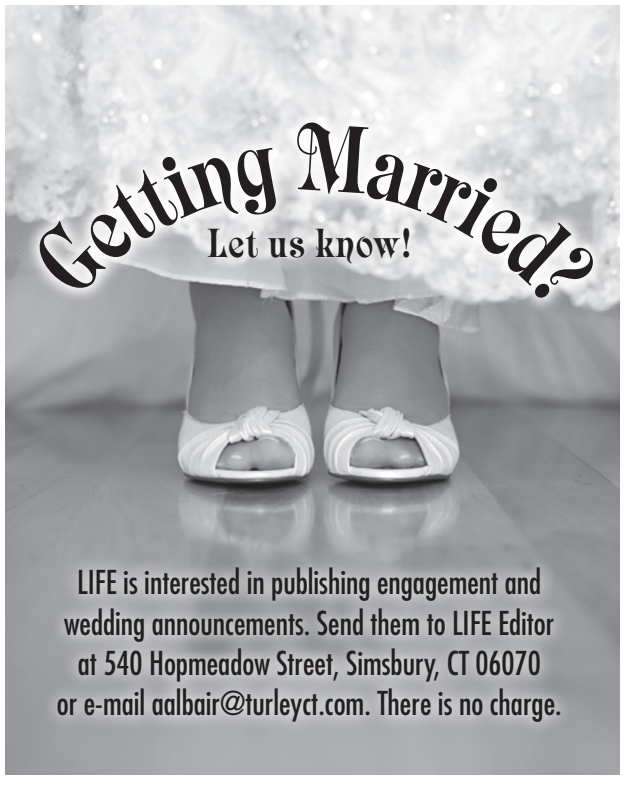
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a new leash on LIFE

Jonathan

Jonathan is a 1-year-old guinea pig who was brought to the humane society because his first home included a dog who thought the little guy was meant to be a snack. He likes attention and feasting on mixed greens. He's also a music lover and sometimes even sings along.

Inquiries about adoption may be made at the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington. Call 860-594-4500. More information, including videos, can be found online at cthumane.org. Click on "Adopt" and "Newington." The Connecticut Humane Society is a private organization and has no time limits for adoption.

Princess

Princess is a 3-year-old terrier, pit bull and boxer mix. She is best suited for life in a single-family home and any children should be 12 or older. Other cats and dogs in the house are fine with her. She is an active pooch and needs lots of exercise; the best match for her is a family with previous active dog experience. Ongoing obedience training is part of her adoption plan. RHL

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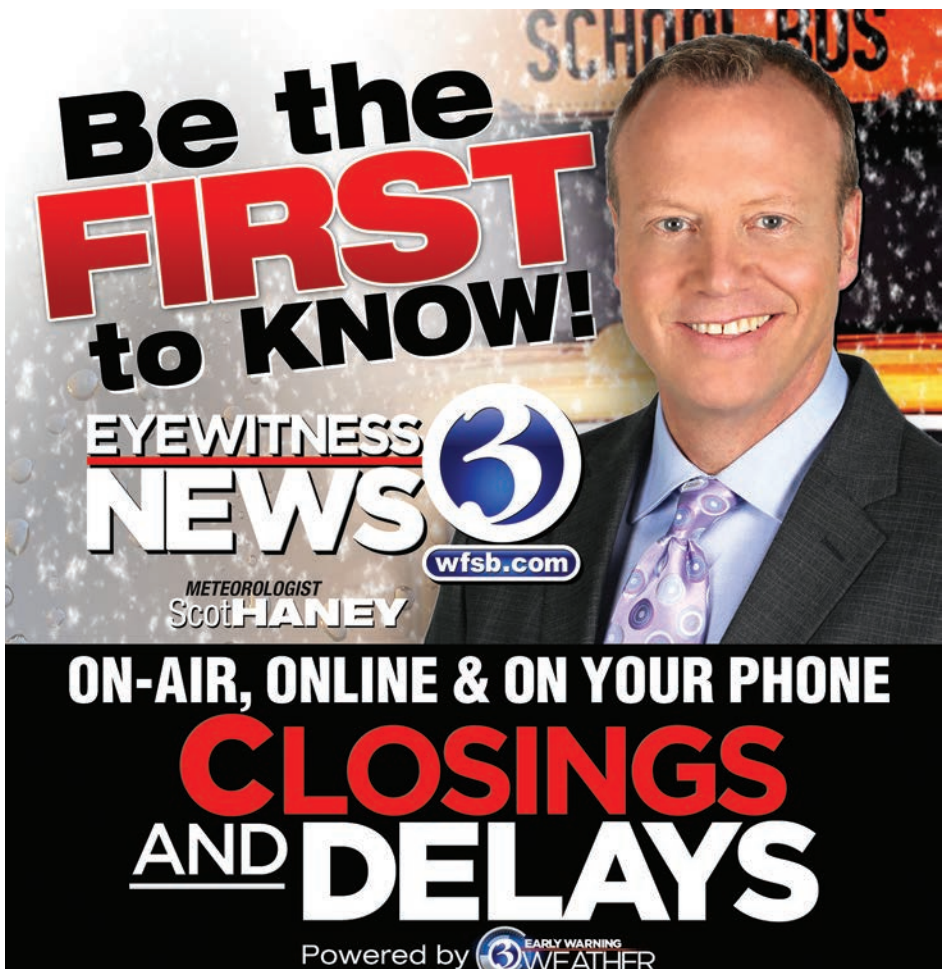
BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

5 years ago, this month!

Do you remember where you were the last weekend of October, 2011? I was actually on the Cape for Halloween experiencing a cold and windy rain, unlike everyone else back in Connecticut. It was not until the drive back that I realized the magnitude of what transpired.

2011 was quite the year for extreme weather here in Southern New England. In June, there was the long track tornado (EF3) that traveled just north of our border in Massachusetts. Then, roughly 2 months after Irene hit the region, it was October 29th and 30th that "Snowtober" or "Storm Alfred" wreaked havoc on the Nutmeg State (keep in mind naming snowstorms is a WFSB tradition that dates back to 1971 and the days of the Travelers Weather Service). It was heavy, wet snow in tandem with fully leafed trees that led to widespread damage and the state's worst power outage with approximately 880,000 customers being impacted (surpassing Irene's ~800,000 outages). Halloween festivities for many had to be postponed or cancelled. For comparison – Sandy, exactly one year later to the day, only led to ~650,000 outages.

The totals from Alfred across Connecticut ranged from just a couple of inches, to two feet! Officially at Bradley International, 12.3" was received, setting a daily snow record and the all-time record for biggest snowstorm in the month of October. **RHL**



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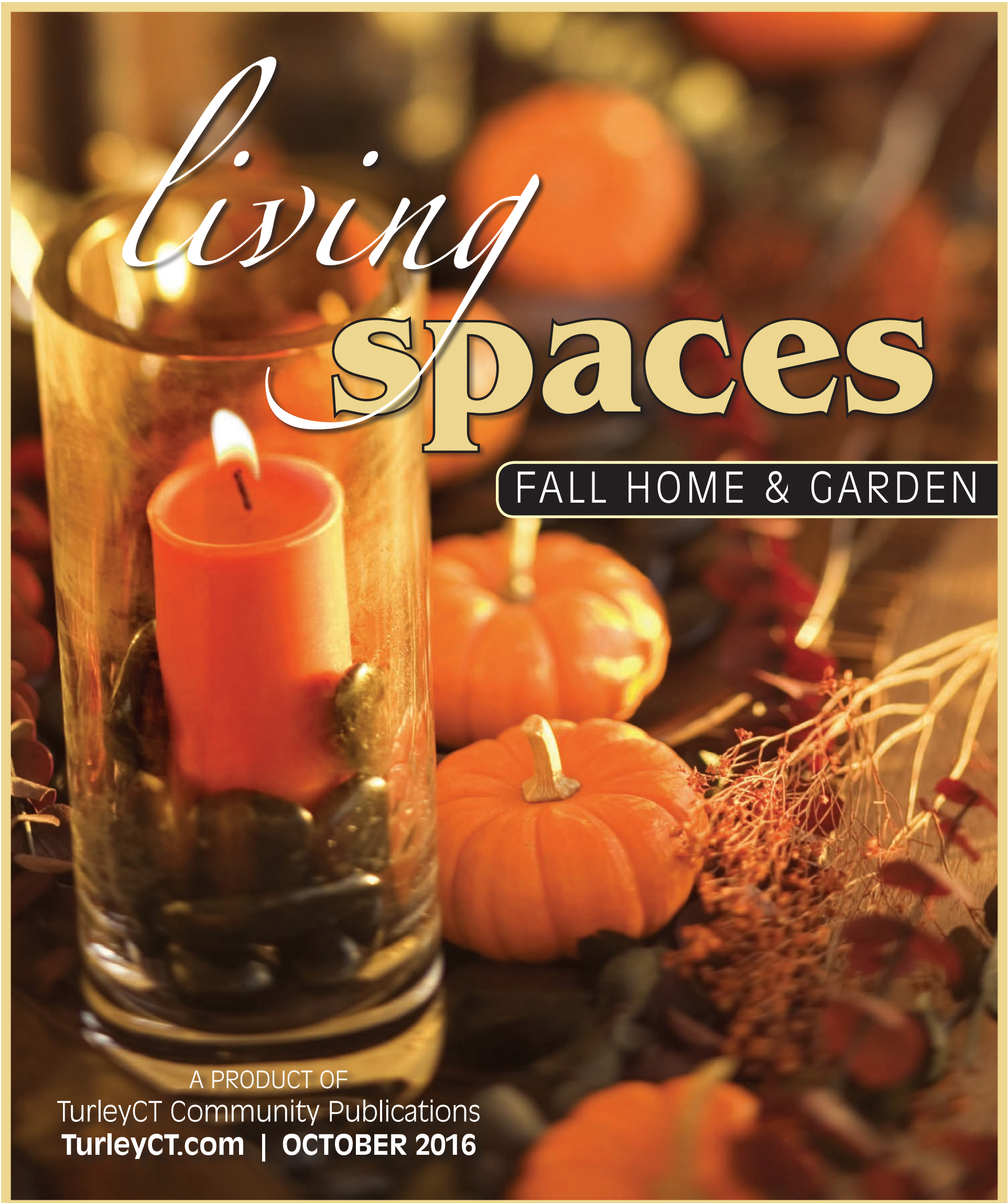
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Fall in love with Decorating

How to give your home an autumnal feeling

by Sloan Brewster
Staff Writer

As the hot days of summer pass behind, add a little warmth to the home.

Carolyn Leining-Lombardi of CT Interior Solutions, in Newington, just started changing some of her decor for fall, she said in a phone call Sept. 13. The tricks she used are ones that anyone can duplicate.

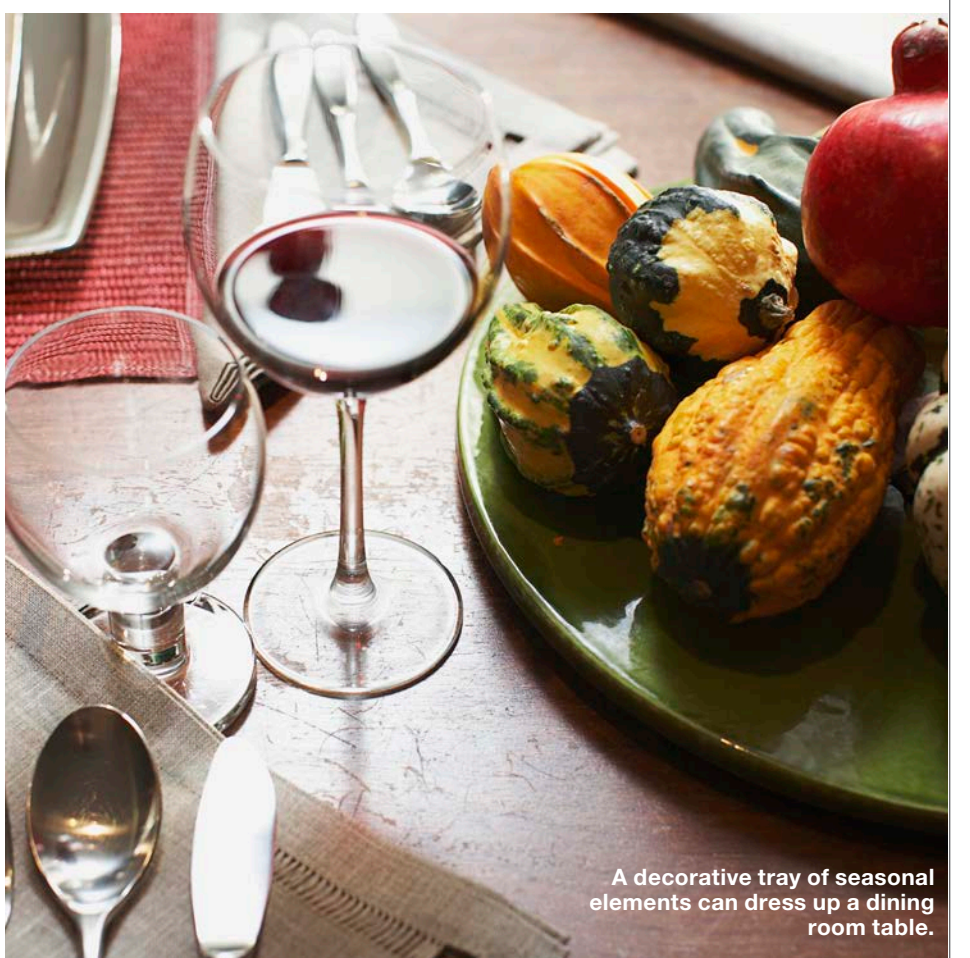
"The coloring all changed," she said. "It's going from very, very light lemony, that cooler feeling for the summer, to warmer tones."

For instance, in place of lemons in a glass vase on the sideboard in her dining room, she put apples and pears.

Across from the vase of apples and pears, she had another vase that she filled with dark red hydrangeas. Next to that, she placed a white candle designed with apples embedded in the wax in a Tuscan pillar candle holder, which she changed from a holder with a summer design and a cool colored candle.

"It kind of pulls it all together," she said of the candle and holder.

On her dining room table, she



A decorative tray of seasonal elements can dress up a dining room table.

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put a decorative tray with light green artichokes, apples and pears, then for fun, in the very center of the tray, she added an old fashioned bicycle made of iron with a bright red seat to pull it all together, she said.

"Now the coloring of that entire kitchen area has changed," Leining-Lombardi said.

Next, she made some changes to the living room. On her coffee table, she keeps an arrangement of artificial flowers in a blue and white vase. Over the summer the flowers were "white, light and flowy," she said.

For fall, she kept the white ones and added pieces of greenery with purple beads and red roselike flowers.

She is also planning to change her throw pillows to include some warmer fall shades.

"It's tiny little things that are so small," she said of how to make season to

Putting leaves in a lantern with a candle, swapping out decorative plates for ones sporting fall colors and designs and changing pot holders all bring in warmer autumn shades.

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season alterations.

Simple ideas to add a nice autumn look that Leining-Lombardi suggested others try included putting leaves in a lantern with a candle, swapping out decorative plates for ones sporting fall colors and designs and changing pot holders to sets in warmer autumn shades.

"It doesn't mean that you have to go out and buy all new pieces of furniture," she said.

"Smaller pieces can be reinvented to reflect the season.

In her home, she has a place holder hanging on the wall, into which she slides a decorative plate, one that she changes with the time of year.

"That's so easy to change, that could be changed in a blink," Leining-Lombardi said. "And they could be changed at Christmas to Christmas plates that you like."

In summer, Leining-Lombardi removes pads from her chairs but in the winter, she puts them back on.

"Just the idea of material, as opposed to wood itself, will warm it up as well," she said.

In her bedroom, she was planning to retain the white core and change the pillows to shades of gold and blue.

"Blue, white and gold looks very striking together," she said. "Right now, it looks very summery, which is what I wanted."

As she did in other rooms, she was also going to swap out candles and candle holders for darker shades. She also planned to change the lamp in the bedroom.

"It's very little, but it just changes the look," she said.

As the temperatures drop, Leining-Lombardi said she may also add a fur throw and pillow.

"It's fur, it's warm, but that'll be more in late October when it's starting to get chilly

A few shifts outdoors add to the overall look, Leining-Lombardi added. She recommended the usual mums and adding lanterns with tea lights.

"They go on at the end of the day so that creates warmth as well," she said.

An ornamental plant to incorporate in the fall is a flowering cabbage.

"It looks like a head cabbage," she said. "Pretty greenery adds a nice touch and can even be brought into a home and put in a pot."

Of course at this time of year, there are pumpkins galore and they're not all orange.

"There are all kinds of pumpkins out there that you can buy," she said. "I'm not particularly fond of orange in my home, but white, the ones that look like vines."

She even had ideas for those whose homes are decorated in colors that generally clash with fall tones. For example, in a home with a lot of pink, add some gray to bring in fall.

"Pink and gray can be worked well together," she said. "Different shades of gray that would warm it up."

Gail Bantle, design consultant from RLF Home in Hartford, recommends adding decorative pillows in fall colors and changing window treatments and bedding.

In summer use brighter colors.

"In autumn, in winter, you want the darker, warmer tones because you want it to be cozy," Bantle said.

Table linens, runners and placemats in the right shades will also bring that warm feeling needed for fall, she said.

Some homeowners change the rugs in front of the sink or change knick-knacks throughout the house based on the time of year or holiday.

"Go to a craft store and pick up some really fun things and place them throughout," she said. "Easy, inexpensive ways to add fall feeling." **RHL**

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TOP USES FOR PUMPKINS THIS SEASON

by Kaitlin McCallum
Assistant Editor

October in Connecticut means lovely crisp air, sweaters, apples and beautiful orange pumpkins on every doorstep. And while carving a traditional jagged-tooth grin and popping a candle inside is an acceptable Halloween option, there's so much more potential locked in the ubiquitous pumpkin. Here are eight of your best options.

Decorate

Pumpkins are beautiful and, paired with mums, make an obvious fall decoration.

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LIVING Spaces

Lisa Gilbert of the Gilbert Farm in Rocky Hill says most people just place them on their doorstep as a welcoming celebration of fall.

Beyond that, they can also be paired with hay bales and cornstalks, Gilbert said.

"Sometimes I've seen people use gourds and a mixture of pumpkins and they layer them to get a piled effect for a fall display," she said.

Gilbert said many customers line the front steps of their homes with different sizes and colors of pumpkins, taking advantage of the many varieties now offered.

"Something new that's been all the rage in Pennsylvania and New England is a stackable pumpkin. You take three different sizes or colored pumpkins and stack them on top of each other. You use a flatter pumpkin for the bottom and the top one is a rounder one," Gilbert said.

"That's something new that's been trending the past few years or so, but has not yet caught on around here."

And for those houses that have crown molding around the door, tiny sugar pumpkins make a cute decoration, Gilbert said.

Use as a serving vessel

Decorating with pumpkins can extend to your dinner table. Kathi

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Martin, owner of Brown's Harvest in Windsor, recommends using them as a serving vessel.

"We will hollow out a bigger pumpkin and use it as a vessel to serve chili or pumpkin soup or set in a liner and do apple cider," Martin said. "There's no harm in not putting in a liner, but any kind of jar or container that would fit inside would be fine."

You could also use smaller pumpkins as individual serving bowls for a dinner party.

Make a face mask

Once you've hollowed out your pumpkins, you can add their insides to your beauty routine.

"On the beauty end of it, you can do a pumpkin peel mask," Martin said. "They're loaded with enzymes and Vitamins A, C and E."

After mixing the pureed contents of one small pumpkin with a few teaspoons of honey and a few teaspoons of milk, apply gently, let sit 20 minutes, wash off and follow with a moisturizer.

Roast the seeds

"It's a very healthy fruit for you," Martin said. "You can use the seeds. Toast them or roast them and between the seeds and the flesh, you're getting lots of different vitamins." To roast the seeds, toss with some oil of your choice, sprinkle

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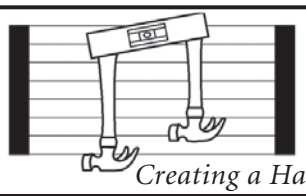
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with sea salt and roast in the oven in a single layer for 45 minutes at 300 degrees.

Bake the fruit

Casseroles, pies, breads and soups are all delicious made with fresh pumpkin, but at Brown's Harvest, Mrs. Brown's pumpkin praline pie is the family's favorite recipe.

"My mom has a recipe for the best pie ever," Martin said. "If you are willing to do a few steps, it is the best. She'll make it a few times and we'll save her a few sugar pumpkins for her to make it at Christmastime."

Find the recipe at www.brownsharvest.com under the recipe's tab.

Carve them

Carving jack-o-lanterns is a popular tradition, with many people opting for electric or battery-operated candles to reduce fire hazard. To keep them looking nice, Martin recommends waiting to carve pumpkins until a day or two before Halloween.

"Some people use vegetable oil or some kind of protectant to preserve it or soak it overnight in water if it starts to shrivel," Martin said. "You could also put in a tiny bit of bleach to keep the bugs away."

Use as a planter to put flowers in

Gilbert said recently she has seen people hollowing out pumpkins to use as planters, too. Seasonal flowers, like mums, which are available at most local farms now, are a good choice to plant in pumpkins for a fall look. To plant, simply cut a large hole at the top, hollow out the insides and poke a few drainage holes in the bottom. Flowers can be planted directly into the pumpkin, filled, two-thirds full with dirt, or just slide a pot into the pumpkin. The pumpkin itself can eventually be planted into the ground, if desired.

Feed the wildlife

When you're absolutely through with your pumpkins, carved or not, you can pass them on as a snack for wildlife. At Gilbert Farm, extra pumpkins are fed to the livestock, but backyard animals are just as happy to eat them.

"Deer love pumpkins. If there are any pumpkins left out in the field, the wildlife will definitely go in and eat them. It's a good source of protein, so if people get done decorating with them they can put them out in their yards. They could dispose of them in their compost pile and between what the wildlife does and Mother Nature does, they will definitely break down," Gilbert said.

"It's such a beautiful fruit that comes in so many different colors and sizes and people love decorating with them," Martin said. "It's just prolonging the colors of the season into fall. In terms of eating pumpkins, there are so many uses beside seeds and pureeing it for soup, pumpkin butter, pumpkin bread. The uses are endless, really." **RHL**

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